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Security Council

Seventy-first year

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7690th meeting

Wednesday, 11 May 2016, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Selim/ Mr. Aboulatta	(Egypt)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	China	Mr. Liu Jieyi
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Japan	Mr. Sugiyama
	Malaysia	Mr. Merican
	New Zealand	Mr. McCully
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin/ Mr. Musikhin
	Senegal	Mr. Seck
	Spain	Mr. Ybáñez
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko/ Mr. Lisuchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Ms. Power
	Uruguay	Mr. Rosselli
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Ramírez Carreño

Agenda

Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts

Countering the narratives and ideologies of terrorism

Letter dated 4 May 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2016/416)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts

Countering the narratives and ideologies of terrorism

Letter dated 4 May 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2016/416)

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I wish to warmly welcome the Deputy Secretary-General, Ministers and other representatives present in the Security Council Chamber. Their presence today underscores the importance of the subject matter under discussion.

In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Afghanistan, Argentina, Australia, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, Cambodia, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Cyprus, Denmark, Djibouti, Georgia, Germany, Haiti, Iceland, India, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Maldives, Montenegro, Morocco, Myanmar, the Netherlands, Norway, Pakistan, Peru, Poland, Qatar, the Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia, Slovenia, Somalia, South Africa, the Sudan, Sweden, the Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Mohi El-Din Afifi, Secretary-General of Al Azhar Islamic Research Academy; and Mr. Steven A. Crown, Vice-President and Deputy General Counsel at Microsoft Corporation.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following to participate in this meeting: His Excellency Mr. Alain Le Roy, Secretary-General of the European External Action Service of the European Union; His Excellency Mr. Nakseu-Nguefang, Director of Political Affairs of the International Organization of la Francophonie; and His Excellency Mr. Ahmed Fathalla, Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the United Nations.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2016/416, which contains a letter dated 4 May 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting a concept paper on the item under consideration.

I now give the floor to the Deputy Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Jan Eliasson.

The Deputy Secretary-General: I thank the Egyptian presidency for convening today's open debate. This is an opportunity to discuss how we can best counter terrorist narratives and ideologies, as well as to recall the fundamental interests and values connected to that pursuit.

The Council is all too aware of the volatile mix of protracted conflicts, terrorism and violent extremism in today's world. It has mourned fallen soldiers, police and peacekeepers, as well as the tragically high numbers of civilian victims of atrocities committed by terrorists. It has used sanctions and other measures to stop their activities. It has understood the serious threat posed by terrorist groups, which control territories and population centres and attempt to blur borders between sovereign States.

We all know that terrorist groups are exploiting religious beliefs in order to incite hatred and violence and to cause division and polarization in our societies. We see that happening all over the world today. They blatantly challenge the values enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and our shared pursuit of peace, justice and human dignity.

We must be aware that terrorist bombs are aimed at devastating more than human lives. They target our common values. They aim to spread fear. We therefore have a responsibility to shield people from harm and fear and to protect universal values from erosion. When we fulfil this responsibility, we gain both a moral and strategic advantage. Faith in fundamental human rights and in the dignity and worth of the human person, and the primacy of global solidarity represent the greatest force in our hands to counter terrorist narratives and ideologies.

There is around the world a great deal of legitimate concern about young people falling prey to terrorist narratives and ideologies. We know that youths may be vulnerable to the lure of terrorists who offer them a sense of belonging, a salary and a promise of glory — even paradise. We all know that their promises are patently false, but we also know that young people are capable of discerning the truth and recognizing siren songs. I believe, in fact, that the vast majority of young people are naturally inclined towards building a good life for themselves and others. I am confident that they are eager to make contributions to peaceful and thriving societies for all.

The Security Council recognized the value and role of young people and young peacebuilders in its historic resolution 2250 (2015) of December last year. That resolution will, I am sure, turn out to be the equivalent for young people of what resolution 1325 (2000) is for women and security.

I dare say that if young people are considered good enough to fight wars, they certainly deserve the chance to make peace. I call on Council members and all Member States to translate the resolution into practice. We must do more than repeat general statements about young people being the leaders of the future, as we often say. We must invest in youth today with material resources and meaningful political empowerment. We must not only work for youth; we must work with youth. Instead of viewing young people as part of the problem, we must harness their immense potential to forge solutions.

In today's world, young people have superior communications skills, extensive social media networks and often more influential voices than their elders. We need only check with our children and grandchildren. If we are to counter terrorist narratives, we have to motivate and mobilize this generation of youth — the largest in history — to amplify our messages of common humanity. Young people are thirsty for visionary ideas. Good governance and respect for human rights and the rule of law should therefore be central components of any inspiring vision. When we give young people avenues and arenas for engagement and action, they will see hope and be ready to build peaceful societies to the benefit of generations to come.

The Secretary-General has often stressed that terrorism and violent extremism are not related to any single ethnic group, nationality or religion. Terrorists are united in their nihilistic and anti-humanistic beliefs. We must respond by uniting as one human family that defends our shared values and embraces diversity. The United Nations is a wonderful platform for such mobilization. The incitement and recruitment of terrorists, as well as conditions conducive to terrorism, have been addressed in several Security Council resolutions, the General Assembly's Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism.

The Secretary-General has called for a comprehensive approach to respond to the complex factors that drive people to violent extremism. It is necessary to counter and refute false and nefarious narratives. Such narratives must be replaced with compelling alternative visions, backed by tangible opportunities for meaningful and constructive engagement, including jobs, as youth unemployment is a scourge around the world.

When we are to address terrorist threats, security and military responses remain important — let us state that clearly — but they are not enough. The Secretary-General strongly focuses on a preventive approach in his Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism. We need to spread positive messages and take pre-emptive actions. Such messages and actions should address conditions that are conducive to terrorism and violent extremism.

We also need to listen carefully to affected communities. We need to engage at the grass-roots level. We need to partner with faith leaders, women and young people. They are the ones on the front lines, facing and standing up to violent extremists, and they know best how to respond at the local and individual levels. The Internet is a powerful tool that violent extremists have used to spread their messages of hate. We should encourage more study and research on how violent extremists are using the Internet and social media.

At the same time, it is important to uphold the freedoms of speech, expression and assembly. Efforts should be redoubled to protect pluralism and diversity, including in the media. The protection of free media can be a defence against terrorist narratives. There must be no arbitrary or excessive punishment against people who are simply expressing their opinions. Space for civil society and non-governmental organizations to operate freely is essential. And journalists and human rights defenders deserve safety and support.

Terrorists are aiming to create a climate of fear and hysteria where human rights are suppressed. We must answer by adamantly preserving our common values, amplifying moderate voices and enabling individual freedom. The fight against terrorism must not be carried out in such a way that we infringe upon basic freedoms. Violations of human rights in the name of countering violent extremism will give terrorists their best recruitment tools. Marginalizing or demonizing certain groups, whoever they may be, fuel the us-against-them menality, which is one of the gravest threats in our world today.

In a deeper sense, the best narrative to counter violent extremism may perhaps not be a narrative. This whole discussion is not about a story; it is about action to build peace, development and human rights. It is about standing together in global solidarity against forces that want to divide and scare us, which want us to forget the beauty of diversity and the tremendous power of fundamental and universal values and principles.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank the Deputy Secretary-General for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Afifi.

Mr. Afifi (*spoke in Arabic*): The world is today experiencing disturbances and instability as a result of the constant violence and the intolerance, extremism and excess that have brought harm so many nations, in particular in the Arab and Muslim worlds, where security and stability are threatened and strife and killing have become widespread. That has led to the destruction of homes and infrastructure in acts of barbarity unseen in history. This phenomenon has surpassed all religious and moral limits and human traditions. It is extremely painful that those crimes are being perpetrated in the name of Islam. That has been exploited by the media in the worst way possible to distort the image of Islam and to present it to the world as if it were a barbaric religion thirsty for the blood of the innocent. In reality we do not need to defend or refute the fact that these crimes have no relation whatever to religions or human traditions.

The Koran states that God only sent Mohammed the Prophet as a blessing unto all beings and unto the world, which is much broader than the word "Muslims". In Islamic philosophy it is even broader than the world of humans, to include the world of plants and animals, as well as objects. The Koran includes a verse directed at the Prophet Mohammed:

> "We sent thee not but as a mercy for all creatures." (*The Holy Koran, XXI: 107*)

Addressing all people, the Prophet Mohammed stated that he was a gift of mercy from God. But he was also merciful of animals, telling us that a woman had entered the fires of hell because she had kept a cat without feeding it or allowing it to eat from the land. He also told us that a man had been forgiven and allowed to enter paradise for giving water to a dog on a hot day. Therefore, if Islam teaches mercy unto animals, then mercy unto human beings is something that Islam of course also calls for. The dignity of human beings in Islam derives from their very humanity, regardless of colour, religion or race. Islam views the world as a single family with a global citizenship that enjoys knowledge of one another and cooperation. God has addressed humankind, stating:

> "Oh, mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other" (*ibid, XLIX:13*).

The Al Azhar Islamic Research Academy has worked to combat the ideology of these organizations that practice violence and killing and threaten peace in societies. It has demonstrated the relationship of these groups to the Khawarij, who emerged in the early history of Islam owing to a deviation in their theology, which led to the takfiri ideology. While that group was defeated in the past, the phenomenon has re-emerged at the hands of young mean and women who are not qualitied — by virtue of discipline, learning or culture — to know Islam in its reality, except through their excitement, passion and extreme reactions. Accordingly, they fell victim to that ideology. As such, their ideas are not based on genuine jurisprudence. We have seen distorted ideologies and concepts that run contrary to the religion spread through social media, including the takfiri notion on governance and the concepts of jihad, the caliphate, a Muslim State, migration and the idea of a "home of war".

Those themes are common to all terrorist organizations like the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), which have been based on the ideas of Abi Allah Al-Maududi, Sayyid Qutb and other founders of intolerant and extreme ideology that when combined with violence becomes terrorism. However, extremism exists not only in the area of intellectual discipline; when it takes on violent behaviours to attack property and lives, they are then armed terrorist organizations used to attack States and societies.

The Al Azhar Islamic Research Academy is making strenuous efforts in the area of education in order to highlight the real ideas and concepts of Islam. That includes the many scholarships we provide for students at our various institutes and colleges. There are now 40,000 students at Al Azhar from 130 countries throughout the world. As part of our global role to spread Islam's tolerant teachings, without excess or extremism, Al Azhar is also providing training courses for imams and preachers from various countries of the world so as to provide a strong foundation for the coexistence of Islam and to denounce extremism and urge respect for national laws and religious pluralism.

At the regional level, Al Azhar is working with the various factions in Syria, Iraq and to bring them together to address the politicization of sectarian conflict and reject the efforts of ISIL, which is exploiting sectarian differences to gain ground.

Al Azhar is also working globally through the Muslim Council of Elders, which is led by the Sheikh of Al Azhar and includes members from different nations of the Muslim world, to spread international peace. The Council, in cooperation with Al Azhar, has launched peace convoys to 15 nations throughout the world. Al Azhar has also established a digital observatory to monitor what ISIL publishes on social networks, where we discuss extremist ideas and refute their fatwas, that is, their religious rulings, in a number of languages, including English, French, Italian, German, Spanish and Chinese, in order to warn young men and women about the danger of ISIL's ideology and prevent them from falling victim to that organization.

Al Azhar views the confrontation between ISIL and other terrorist organizations in the world as a cause that requires a number actions, the most important of which are the following.

Due concern must be given to discussing extremist ideas and refuting them. Young men and women must be encouraged, through social networks and international cooperation, to counteract the ability of these organizations to exploit the virtual world to market terrorism. Common human values must be valued and emphasized. We must avoid relating the conduct of terrorism to religion. We must uphold the role of religious leaders and foster dialogue among them. We must work to spread the concepts of the peaceful coexistence among peoples. We must focus on the role of young people, support them and integrate them in the economy and politics of different societies by offering them job opportunities and protecting them from extremist ideologies. We must support women, respect their capabilities and include them in all efforts to achieve justice among peoples. We must not discriminate and we must respect the particularities of all societies. We must focus on education and develop curriculums that promote peaceful coexistence and respect for the other, for global citizenship and for the plurality of religions and societies. We must engage all leaders of the world in a genuine confrontation of terrorism, which is now threatening international peace and security and stability and whose threat is rapidly growing. We hope for a world that enjoys peace, stability and coexistence and respects humankind

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. Afifi for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Crown.

Mr. Crown: Microsoft welcomes this opportunity to contribute to this important discussion. I should say that others, such as Mr. Afifi, academics, educators and civil society organizations across the globe, are more expert on the precise narratives and ideologies of modern terrorist groups. I do not presume to know what constitutes the most effective messaging to change minds or to keep minds from being bent towards terrorism. But I do understand deeply the challenge that Internet companies face in dealing with the phenomenon of terrorism, and I hope that my comments will help us find a principled way forward.

As a representative from the Internet and communications technology sector, the question I will address is: "As understanding of effective counter-messaging evolves, how can we best work together?" For the industry, those of us in the Internet business, the scale of the terrorist challenge is daunting. Drawing just from public sources, we know that there are tens of thousands of terrorist Internet accounts that refuse to die. As one is taken down, another quickly springs up in its place. Account names and identifiers change. Content is edited. But terrorist propaganda and communication continue.

Within 15 minutes of the Paris attacks of 13 November, there were 7,500 tweets. Within two weeks, there were 1 million views of videos on the Internet praising the attacks. Another company in our sector has noted that every day their 1.6 billion users across the globe submit 1 million reports of objectionable postings across all their content categories. The point is that there is no single elegant solution. If there were, industry would have adopted it. There is no silver bullet that will stop terrorist use of the Internet. Microsoft, like others in the industry — but I can only speak for Microsoft — approaches the challenge of terrorism and violent extremism on the Internet from the perspective of a technology company with global reach, and with aspirations that are just as ambitious.

Terrorist abuse of Internet platforms is a complicated topic. I think it is important to ground any discussion about the future work together and the future of the global Internet in a clear understanding of the past and the present.

One comment on the past: it is an obvious, but easily overlooked, historical fact that what we know today as the Internet was conceived in trust. Initial sharing technologies assumed well-intentioned people working proactively together for good ends. It evolved from connections among research facilities. Of course, the Internet, once released to the world, quickly attracted bad actors. Any technology can be used either for good or for evil. That was true of fire — think of arson — of gunpowder and of the printing press. It is true also of our information technology products and platforms.

The industry is built on the idea that by enabling communication, we can unleash human potential. Microsoft's mission is to empower every person and every organization on the planet to achieve more. Nothing could be more in conflict with the aspirations of our industry than the misuse of our technologies to spread violence, to destroy and to kill.

As we look at the challenge today, where do we find ourselves? I think it is important to understand that when we talk about what companies can do and should do, we need to keep in mind that there is no monolithic information and communication technologies (ICT) industry. If you consider the big players on the global stage, actually we are a collection of companies who offer different technologies and different platforms. Microsoft services and Microsoft the company are different from Google, which is different from Facebook, which is different from Twitter. All of us differ in significant ways. We compete fiercely — at times incredibly fiercely — but we have come together before when we have seen our platforms abused. Perhaps the best example of our joint work as an industry is cooperation on a global scale to combat child sex abuse material.

As we think about addressing the challenge of terrorist abuse of our services, the Internet technology industry is similarly united. We unanimously condemn terrorism. To respond more effectively, we need to find better paths forward, paths that all stakeholders can walk together.

In today's discussion, I especially want to underscore the potential of public-private partnerships. Public-private partnerships can, and should, be a part of our global response to this challenge. Once one recognizes that terrorist use of the Internet is a global challenge, it becomes clear that this problem will not be solved by Internet technology companies alone, or by States, or by non-governmental organizations, acting alone. We must work in a coordinated way.

That realization is what led to the formation last month of a new multi-stakeholder effort, under the umbrella of the Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate. Meeting in Geneva, in partnership with ICT for Peace, which will serve as a coordinating function, and a range of Internet companies, Government actors, academics and civil society organizations, we came together to build a new level of understanding. Our focus will be to develop creative, cooperative efforts to address the challenge of terrorist use of the Internet.

Of course, any effective and trustworthy public-private partnership must be grounded in transparency. We will, therefore, seek maximum transparency in that effort, and reports on the subject should be appearing in the coming year. I would, however, like to telegraph a couple of things to watch for. We have to embrace certain unfortunate truths. There is no universally accepted definition of terrorism or extremism, neither at the international level nor at the regional level. It is true that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights provide international standards that point to appropriate and lawful regulation of the expression and communication of ideas. But the United Nations itself has noted that those principles have never been reduced to an internationally binding instrument that sets forth definitive norms. That is no surprise, since defining lines in the area are very hard to draw. But we can broadly agree on especially harmful actors, and we can focus attention in a principled way.

So the goal of public-private partnerships for addressing the terrorist use of the Internet, including through the creation and use of counter-narratives or other positive speech, should not be a search for a single right solution. The path to success will be through dialogue and learning. I have colleagues in the law field in more than 50 countries, and just last week in Redmond, Washington, Microsoft's corporate headquarters, we held the annual summit of our corporate external and legal affairs department. As Microsoft and as an industry, we uniquely appreciate that we need to be open to alternative views and solutions that work differently across the globe.

As we explore alternatives, including the use of counter-narratives, whatever form they might take, we must anchor ourselves in the rule of law, including international law. We must protect timeless values, including the freedom of expression, which includes the right both to seek and to receive information, and the rights to privacy. Our activities in that realm must be principled, but they must push beyond what we are doing today. Already there are some interesting proposals that the new working group under the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) will explore. They include simplified, perhaps common, models and processes that can make it easier for stakeholders, including Governments, to bring to companies' attention Internet content that, on its face, violates companies' terms of use. Companies have established terms of use in order to moderate what happens in the communities that they have built, and there are opportunities for principled collaboration on the use of the terms that we have provided. There are also opportunities to improve efficiency and transparency measures, so that Governments, under the rule of law, can work more effectively with companies to pursue criminal investigations, including investigations of terrorists and violent extremists.

The work with CTED presents an important new forum for sharing practices across the industry and beyond. We will share experiences, research and ideas aimed at improving the effectiveness of responses to terrorism on the Internet, while advancing the rule of law and protecting and respecting human rights. I would like to underscore that last point. The rule of law and the protection and respect for human rights are critical for Microsoft. I know through my work with colleagues across the industry that the rule of law and the protection and respect for human rights are critical for all of the major Internet companies. Any plan for coordinated action must be based on that foundation.

We at Microsoft have published a global human rights statement that sets forth our philosophy. We believe that active engagement in the more than 100 countries where we do business is the right approach. We were an early signatory to the United Nations Global Compact and, across the planet, we are a strong advocate for the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. We are a founding member of the Global Network Initiative, and I represent Microsoft on the board of directors of that organization, which brings together companies, civil society, academics and investors. Our focus is one of principled respect for freedom of expression and privacy on the global Internet.

As we work together across sectors, we should also act with a certain humility, acknowledging that we do not have perfect knowledge. But we must not let that stand in the way of principled action. So my key message today is that we need more discussion, and we need exploration of new and improved ways to address the misuse of Internet communication platforms. When it comes to combating terrorists' misuse of the global Internet — including when we work together to improve the use of counter-narratives in the fight against terrorists and their ideologies — as long as we are anchored in the rule of law, as long as we protect and respect human rights and as long as we cooperate transparently in a way that enhances the public's trust, there is no discussion topic that should be off the table. I look forward to that discussion and to deploying new strategies.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. Crown for his briefing.

The Council has before it the text of a statement by the President on behalf of the Council on the subject of today's meeting. I thank Council members for their valuable contributions to it. In accordance with the understanding reached among the members of the Council, I shall take it that they agree to the statement, which will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2016/6.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as Minister for Foreign Affairs of Egypt.

I would like at the outset to express my gratitude to everyone here for the assistance and support extended to the Egyptian presidency of the Security Council this month, and for their participation in today's important discussion on combating the messages and ideologies of terrorist groups. The international community, and the United Nations in particular, must make the issue a top priority in the context of its counter-terrorism efforts. I would also like to welcome our speakers today.

The day before I left for New York, a dastardly assassination took the lives of eight policemen in Cairo. That serves as a reminder that terrorism is no longer constrained by borders, since the twisted doctrine that murdered those Egyptian officers who were defending their citizens is the very same one that has claimed victims among concertgoers in Paris and travellers at the Brussels airport. Solidarity with every human soul is an obligation, regardless of whether those souls come from a European, an Arab or an African country. Confronting the rising tide of terrorism, which we believe is one of the major threats to international peace and security today, is also an obligation. If we do not all share that obligation, overcoming the challenge will be very difficult. I would like to ask the Council to stand for a moment in memory of the souls of the victims of those dastardly attacks.

The members of the Security Council observed a minute of silence.

During his address at the April Summit of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, President Abdel Fattah Al Sisi said that the international system has become flawed. In order to address that issue, we must, of course, examine the factors behind it. Internationally, there is an imbalance in the international system, as reflected in the dwindling adherence to the concept of the State in the Middle East and the Arab region in the wake of the Iraq war. In our region, which has been negatively affected by the ambitions of forces in the Middle East looking to expand their influence at the expense of Arab States, and in the resulting increase in regional tensions, as well as the emergence of extremist and terrorist organizations seeking to fill the vacuum of authority in large region within States in the region.

We also have to deal with the illusions of regional and international Powers that aim to classify such organizations to suit their political goals. The ramifications of that state of affairs are evident and clear, with all they entail with regard to the manifold cruelties inflicted upon the innocent people of the region. In that regard, I recall the Syrian tragedy, in which terrorist organizations have proliferated and prospered. I urgently stress the need to bring an end to that tragedy as soon as possible through cooperation between the States members of the International Syrian Support Group and the Security Council, given the Council's authority to end the suffering of the fraternal Syrian people.

Africa, which Egypt has the honour of representing in the Security Council, also suffers from the malaise of terrorist organizations, such as Al-Qaida and Boko Haram, that are present in various parts of the continent, including North Africa, where Da'esh has for some time controlled the strategic Libyan city of Sirte, located on the shores of the Mediterranean, opposite the coast of Europe.

The passage of 70 years since the eruption of the Arab-Israeli conflict does not make it irrelevant, as it remains the most crucial issue in our region. The decades-long failure to take action to resolve this conflict has deepened and exacerbated the main factors behind the region's instability and the rise of terrorism. It would be a mistake to believe that the passing of time or the outbreak of other conflicts will overshadow this one or result in the imposition of an unjust resolution that does not grant the Palestinians their rights like all other peoples. Those who claim that the occupation of Arab lands will not give rise to popular reaction that would prolong the crisis, to the benefit extremist organizations in the region, are also sadly mistaken.

Egypt has always stressed that the fight against international terrorism can succeed only if we adopt a non-selective approach that seriously and objectively addresses the roots of that phenomenon and all its elements by decisively confronting all terrorist organizations equally and combatting the extremist ideologies that give rise to terrorism and violence and those who propagate them. The international community must also be firm and decisive in dealing with the military, financial and political support that some countries and partners provide to those terrorist organizations. Such support constitutes a flagrant violation of international law and relevant Security Council resolutions. All of us must increase our coordination and cooperation in order to dry up those sources of support.

A thorough reading of the history and activities of those organizations confirms the absence of core ideological divergences among them. All of them adhere to the same extremist ideologies espoused by the thinkers of terrorism, the takfiri ideology and violence, including Sayyid Qutb. They adopt such ideologies as the basis for their activities, narrative and media messages, which are based on animosity and the rejection of society — distorted concepts that contradict the spirit of Islam, which rejects isolationism and extremism and embraces a magnanimous message of acceptance and diversity. The message of Islam, in fact, solidified the principles of tolerance, peaceful coexistence and respect for human rights. Furthermore, I would highlight the fact that the exploitation by terrorist groups of the technological revolution represented by online communication platforms and social media is one of the major factors that has enabled them to disseminate their messages and ideologies in an unprecedented manner.

I must also stress the importance of confronting the phenomenon of Islamophobia, which contributes to the spread of extremist thought and increased recruitment by terrorist organizations of young people from Muslim minorities in Western countries. We must review many integration policies and confront hate speech and insults aimed at the symbols and sanctities of the Islamic faith under the guise of free speech. We believe that, to be successful, the action required of the Council and the international community in general must incorporate guidelines aimed, among other things, at the following.

First, we must take advantage of the active efforts of moderate religious institutions and build upon such efforts, both by refuting the messages and ideologies used by terrorist groups and by highlighting and explaining the interpretations of the true concepts of religions. In that regard, I wish to underline the substantial efforts undertaken in several countries around the world by Al Azhar and the Egyptian Dar Al-Ifta.

Secondly, it is important for countries and societies, including in the West, to reaffirm that terrorism is not linked to any religion, culture or people.

Thirdly, national legislation must be enacted to criminalize the spread of terrorist messages and ideologies without infringing on the principle of freedom of expression. That includes stepping up efforts to halt the financing that terrorist groups require to disseminate their terrorist messages and ideologies.

Fourthly, we must promote the role that the media can play in combating the narratives and ideologies of terrorism groups.

Fifthly, we need to emphasize the role that civil society can play in different countries in the context of national laws in combating the narratives and ideologies of terrorist groups.

Sixthly, we need to cooperate and harmonize our ongoing efforts at the national, regional and international levels to combat the messages and ideologies of terrorist groups in order to avoid contradictions and inconsistencies. We must also enhance cooperation among countries in that regard and provide the necessary technical assistance, capacity-building and financial resources, upon request.

Presidential statement S/PRST/2016/6, adopted by the Council today, and the tireless efforts of the General Assembly are a crucial comprehensive framework to implement those proposals and objectives. I thank the members of the Council for cooperating with the Egyptian initiative and invite them, along with all Members of the Untied Nations, to immediately agree on a specific framework of implementation based on the provisions of the presidential statement. Our voice in confronting terrorism must be firm. We must stand united. The message of the entire world to terrorists must be clear and resounding. It must affirm that terrorists are the enemies of humankind, that they do not represent any religion, that their downfall is at hand and that their messages and ideologies run counter to logic, human nature and any and all creeds. Let us work together to elevate the voice of truth, justice and tolerance above the voice of terrorism, extremism and hate.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I will now give the floor to other members of the Security Council.

I give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of New Zealand.

Mr. McCully (New Zealand): I would like to start by thanking Minister Selim for convening this open debate on countering the narratives and ideologies of terrorism. Today we are dealing with a threat whose scale and spread requires a global and collective response and surely commands the attention of the Security Council.

My country, New Zealand, once regarded itself as largely removed from the threat of international terrorism, protected by its geography. Sadly, we now live in a world where terrorism is a global enterprise, exported through modern technology and sophisticated social media. Every society has its element of disenchanted and disenfranchised people who provide a ready market for extremist ideology. Every society has its element of disturbed or criminal minds who find international terrorist branding a convenient cloak.

New Zealand strongly supports the four pillars of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy — addressing the conditions that spread terrorism, preventing and combating terrorism, counter-terrorism capacity-building, and respecting human rights and the rule of law. The Security Council has a central role to play in guiding a comprehensive international response to terrorism. I want to make three brief points.

First, the most important contribution the Security Council can make to combat terrorism is to improve its capacity to prevent and resolve conflict. Unresolved conflicts in Syria and Iraq are fertile breeding grounds for terrorism and extremist ideology, a phenomenon we have already witnessed in Afghanistan and elsewhere. The unresolved conflict in Palestine has now fuelled generations of hopelessness and extremism. Therefore, my first message is that the Council must face up to its core business of preventing and resolving conflicts if it wants to eliminate the conditions under which extremist narratives and ideologies will breed and spread.

Secondly, stronger, fairer and more inclusive societies are the best long-term sustainable defence against the spread of terrorism. Establishing unifying, inclusive governance that respects human rights and the rule of law and that does not succumb to the short-term temptation to marginalize significant groups is critical to the long-term fight against extremist ideologies. That is true in Iraq and Afghanistan. It is true in all countries.

Thirdly, Governments will need to be increasingly active and innovative in their counter-terrorism strategies and continue to improve cooperation across national borders. That has to be done globally, in particular through the full implementation of the Council's sanctions regimes targeting the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), Al-Qaida and the Taliban, and regionally. For my country, enhanced cooperation across the Asia-Pacific region is of great importance, especially through the growing number of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations-based counter-terrorism initiatives.

As we see greater success against ISIL in Iraq and Syria, the return of foreign terrorist fighters will become a challenge for many nations, my own included. Cooperation across such areas as policing, border control and aviation security will be increasingly important. Policies relating to the detention and reintegration of terrorist detainees present questions that are both complex and challenging.

As I have already said, the Security Council has a central role to play in guiding a comprehensive international response to combating terrorist narratives and ideologies. At home, in our region and further afield, New Zealand is committed to playing its full part.

Ms. Power (United States of America): I thank Deputy Secretary-General Eliasson, Secretary-General Afifi and Deputy General Counsel Crown for taking the time to brief us today on this very important topic. I also want to single out Egypt for thanks, and Mr. Selim specifically, for calling this meeting.

I would also like to offer my sympathies on behalf of the American people to you, Mr President, and the people of Egypt for the despicable attack that occurred in Cairo on Sunday, which killed eight police officers. That ambush underscores the continuing, deadly, inhuman threat posed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) (Da'esh) and, of course, by groups that adopt similar tactics.

On a visit to Cameroon, Chad and Nigeria last month, I met with some of the countless victims of Boko Haram, which recently pledged allegiance to Da'esh. One woman I spoke with had seen her husband executed and had her three children ripped from her grip and taken by Boko Haram. Now alone, displaced, she does not know why she is still alive. As she says, her life no longer has meaning. She just sits around all day, every day, and pines for her children and wonders if there is more that she can do to somehow bring them back.

I met a 14-year-old girl who described having been given a "choice" by the terrorists who had burned down her home: be killed or become a Boko Haram bride. She chose life, and after a year of sexual enslavement by Boko Haram, she managed somehow to escape her monstrous captor. But now in a refugee camp, she blames herself for the stigma that she carries with her from the time that she spent with Boko Haram. She feels shame, while those who enslaved her appear incapable of shame.

An 8-year-old boy told me that he was studying at his madrasa when Boko Haram began shooting. He fled alone into the bush and has not seen his parents since. He does not know if they are alive.

Such horrors inject acute urgency into this meeting as the Council seeks to strengthen its collective effort to defeat ISIL, Al-Qaida and terrorist groups like them. There could be no more urgent cause on Earth.

None of us are immune to the threat posed by those groups. In Minneapolis on Monday, three young American men went on trial charged with conspiring to provide material support to ISIL and to commit murder abroad. One of their mothers lamented what had happened to her boy, saying,

> "I told him to never even mention those names, Al-Shabaab or ISIL, because the Koran says nothing about the reasons to kill anyone in the ways ISIL talks about."

Six other Americans pleaded guilty to similar charges earlier this year. Some of them told the judge that they had been inspired by ISIL recruitment videos and social media.

As we consider the task of countering violent ideologies, we all must recognize that the common goal of countering terrorist ideologies should never be used as an excuse to suppress political dissent. Many countries recognize narrow, clearly delineated exceptions to the right of the freedom of expression, such as incitement to imminent violence, which is an exception to that right in the United States. But there is a clear and vast difference between responding to those legally prescribed exceptions and broad-based attempts to silence Government critics. Legal action is a critical tool in the campaign against ISIL, but it must not be wielded like a cudgel against those who voice unpopular speech or criticize authorities. Such behaviour does not prevent violent extremism, it fuels it. I would offer three principles upon which to ground our common strategy to counter the poisonous ideologies and narratives propagated by groups like ISIL.

First, such a strategy should focus on exposing the lies, distortions and falsehoods that underpin terrorist narratives. The most influential and effective actors in this effort will always be religious leaders, civil society organizations, community groups and individual citizens. Independent voices can spread the truth about what life is really like under ISIL control. Religious leaders can reject ISIL's perverse distortions of faith by spreading Islam's message of peace, love and tolerance.

ISIL clearly fears this threat. Just this part weekend, the group called for the murder of 11 imams and scholars living in the United States and elsewhere who have actively worked to rebut its narratives and discredit its ideology. Governments can play a supporting role by convening and amplifying independent voices, as the United States has done in partnership with the United Arab Emirates in the establishment of the Sawab Centre, which has provided training to civil society organizations and other groups.

Secondly, an effective strategy will facilitate the free flow of information. Such openness expands public access to the truth, and in this battle, the truth is clearly on our side. We have nothing to be afraid of. The Internet itself is not a threat, though it can host ISIL lies and propaganda. It also makes possible the flow of counter-narratives, the exchange of new ideas and the voices of tolerance, which vastly outnumber the exceptions. A free press might criticize its Government — certainly the free press in my country does that — but that is precisely what makes those voices credible and ensures that they are seen as independent by the public. A reputation for impartiality and reliability is what makes their reporting on the atrocities and perversions of ISIL and others so powerfully important.

By contrast, arresting journalists, sentencing reporters to death and treating the media as an enemy of the State — such actions are thoroughly counterproductive. The media are an ally when it comes to showing the truth about terrorists groups. Attacking the media will not produce a more compliant citizenry; instead, it will produce a more alienated, suspicious and disenfranchised public, one more likely to chafe under a Government's attempts at control — all to the benefit of terrorist groups.

It is telling that one authority that recently sought to curtail the flow of information to the people under its control is ISIL itself. Last year, it banned private Internet access in Raqqa in an attempt to prevent disaffected fighters from reaching their families and to stop locals from telling the outside world about life under ISIL rule. It also banned satellite dishes and receivers, railing against what it called "the news channels that spread false lies and defamation". ISIL is right that the Internet and free media threaten its adherents. It is critically important that no State Member of the United Nations follow its lead and adopt the same view.

That brings me to the third principle that should undergird our approach. We have to better understand the factors that draw some people or communities to terrorist narratives, so that we can better spot them and counter them. The motivation of those who become radicalized is extremely varied. To give one example, after extensive online conversations, one lonely 23-year-old Sunday-school teacher and babysitter in Washington State was prepared to marry a stranger and move to Syria. She was stopped only after her grandparents intervened. Recalling the gifts and attention that her new online contacts lavished upon her, she told a reporter later, "I felt like I was betraying God and Christianity, but I also felt excited because I had made a lot of new friends".

An imam in central Mali recently told a researcher from Human Rights Watch that an extremist group's local appeal had nothing to do with religion but simply that, in a region where the Government is unable to provide security or basic social services, "the jihadists provide a better alternative to the State". Identifying those dynamics enables us to seek to address them, and the strategy that we develop today to combat terrorist narratives must be grounded in broader efforts to counter and prevent violent extremism. Endorsing the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (A/70/674) when it is raised next month will represent an important step in that direction.

In conclusion, I mentioned earlier that ISIL recently called for the murder of 11 imams and scholars in response to their efforts to counter ISIL's messaging. What are they doing that makes them so dangerous to ISIL? They are not just rejecting the terrorists' perverted views. They are actively promoting alternative ideas and advancing a more positive narrative. They are doing so not only through the older tools that traditional social-media platforms like Twitter, YouTube, Instagram and Facebook offer, they are discussing religion over SnapChat. Counter-messaging, social media and an open Internet that enables young people to access such content is how we defeat the narratives and ideologies of ISIL in the modern era. That is the antidote — not restrictions on the media, filters on the Internet or attacks on political opponents. In the development of our common framework and in our approaches based on our individual systems of governance, it is essential that we see political freedom as the enemy of terrorism that it is.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Malaysia

Mr. Merican (Malaysia): I join earlier speakers in thanking you, Mr. President, for convening this timely debate on such a critically important topic. The concept note (S/2016/416, annex) that you shared in advance also provided useful guidance. I also wish to thank the briefers, whose respective briefings have brought keen insights and added much value to the discussion today.

At this stage, my delegation aligns itself with the statements to be delivered by the representatives of Thailand and Kuwait, who will speak on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, respectively.

For the past quarter century or so, the United Nations and the Security Council have been at the forefront of international efforts to counter the scourge of terrorism and violent extremism. Besides the necessary targeted military actions and intelligence operations on the ground, we have established norms, networks, structures, strategies and action plans to counter the spreading influence of terrorists, fighting them on a number of critical fronts, notably their movement, financing and recruitment.

Those efforts have shown varying degrees of success. However, we can do more. And we must do more. That is why today's discussion has particular resonance for us, as it seeks to address the narrative or ideological aspect of terrorism, and one of the main drivers of the phenomenon. Accordingly, we are pleased to join the consensus on the presidential statement just adopted (S/PRST/2016/6), which we fully support, and we thank the Egyptian delegation for initiating it.

Terrorism and violent extremism are global threats that transcend cultures, religions and geopolitical boundaries. They have no religion. In the past few decades, the international community has engaged in long-standing struggles against various terrorist groups worldwide, from the Irish Republican Army to the Tamil Tigers and Aum Shinrikyo. We thus reject any association of terrorism and violent extremism with any one religion, nationality or ethnic group.

However, as Muslims, we should not be in denial. We should be honest with ourselves and acknowledge that, whether we like it or not, there is a critical need for us to address the exploitation of Islam by terrorist groups, which has led to the perceived link between terrorism and Islam or Muslims. As all of us are aware, among the most heinous and nefarious perpetrators of terrorism and violent extremism today are Al-Qaida, the Taliban, the Al-Nusra Front, Al-Shabaab, Boko Haram and Da'esh. They all have one thing in common — they rely on Islam, or more accurately, their twisted interpretation of Islam, to legitimize their causes, justify their criminal actions and attract their followers. Therefore, for the purpose of today's debate, I wish to focus my statement on that disturbing phenomenon, notwithstanding our long-held position that terrorism must be dissociated from any particular religion.

It has been said that in order to understand a religion, one must study its scriptures. In our Koran, the holy scripture for Muslims, a message of peace, justice and honourable conduct is featured prominently and constitutes the very essence of Islam. Indeed, the very definition of Islam itself is peace. To illustrate that, the Koran states:

(*spoke in Arabic*)

> "And make not Allah's name an excuse in your oaths against doing good, or acting rightly, or making peace between persons; for Allah is One Who heareth and knoweth all things." (*The Holy Koran*, II: 224)

(*spoke in English*)

Meanwhile, on justice, Allah says, in verse 8 of Surah Al-Maidah:

(*spoke in Arabic*)

> "O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm for Allah, witnesses in justice, and do not let the hatred of a people prevent you from being just. Be just; that is nearer to righteousness. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is acquainted with what you do."

In light of such clear commands in the Koran, we strongly denounce the terrorists' claims that their barbarity is sanctioned by Islam. The concept of "the end justifies the means" has no place in Islam. So even if you have good intentions or you are fighting a just cause, you are still not allowed to achieve it via wrongful means or to commit transgressions against others.

Long before the Geneva Conventions existed, Prophet Muhammad and subsequent scholars instituted a just-war doctrine. Among other things, during the conduct of war, Muslims are forbidden from harming non-combatants, particularly women, children, the elderly and the sick, as well as envoys, diplomats and those praying in houses of worship. They are even prohibited from harming civilian objects, including water wells, trees, crops and livestock. That is the true and right teaching of Islam. True Muslims do not accept ideologies that espouse hatred, wanton violence and destruction. We must make absolutely clear that the extremists are the blasphemers. It is they who insult and pervert the teaching of the Holy Koran and the Sunnah.

It is abundantly clear to my delegation that if we are to successfully counter the terrorist narrative, we cannot limit the response to merely denouncing violence or stating why their approach is wrong; we must cut through their rhetoric and seductive approaches. An ideology does not exist in a vacuum. To those who are marginalized, disenchanted or frustrated, an ideology can be a powerful thing. It provides a sense of purpose, a sense of direction and a sense of belonging, especially when faced with deep underlying sociopolitical grievances.

Based on investigations of the motivations of foreign terrorist fighters in Malaysia, their main motivation has been found to be political in nature, be it prolonged and grievous injustice, gross violations of human rights, foreign occupation, or systematic discrimination against people whom they identify with due to shared religion, values or ethnicity. Beyond this motivation, they share little similarities in terms of academic background, social status or geographical origin. Thus, in countering the terrorists' narrative, it is also crucial to remove these underlying root causes in order to expose the fallacy of their arguments. This will diminish the soft power of the terrorists in manipulating sociopolitical grievances to gain sympathy among impressionable youths and to recruit foreign terrorist fighters worldwide.

Part of Malaysia's efforts in countering the extremist narrative is also to engage with religious and community leaders to spread accurate messages about Islam. We believe that there is a need to encourage more IT and media-savvy Muslim public figures and scholars to reach out to youths via social media to provide a counter-narrative, including to clarify the concept of jihad, which has been twisted to serve the terrorists' agenda.

At times, the promise of heavenly reward and spiritual salvation has led some to become misguided and fall for the terrorists' narrative. Thus, in our response we have incorporated a rehabilitation programme as part of our counter-terrorism measures. This is consistent with our belief in long-term rehabilitation and not just punitive action in dealing with terrorists. Under this programme, experts from various religious departments, clerics and police counsellors actively engage with detainees and provide guidance with the aim of eventually restoring them as useful members of society.

Malaysia remains steadfast in its belief that terrorism and violent extremism are twin cancers that require our collective and concerted effort to address. We therefore reaffirm our commitment to continuing our close cooperation with the United Nations and relevant international organizations towards that end.

On a final note, I wish to stress that terrorist attacks do not discriminate among women or children; they do not discriminate between old or young; black or white; Muslims, Jews or Christians; rich or poor. All of us are potential victims of terrorism. In our response to this threat, let us not allow the terrorists to divide us. Hysterical responses to terrorism, including by discriminating against a group of people for their peaceful religious beliefs or branding an entire group of people as terrorists, will merely perpetuate terror and paranoia and further serve the terrorists' narrative.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now giove the floor to the Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Spain.

Mr. Ybáñez (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Let me begin by thanking Minister Selim and Egypt, as president of the Security Council for this month, for their initiative to organize this meeting devoted to the action of the international community to counter the narratives and ideologies of terrorism.

As occurred on Sunday with Cairo, Today we woke up to the news of new attacks in Baghdad, which have caused more than 70 fatalities. Most of the victims were women who were going to do their daily shopping. Once again, the daily lives of citizens have been tragically cut short. I offer my most heartfelt condolences to the people and the authorities of Iraq, and its Ambassador here present.

Throughout history, it is has been noted that for evil to triumph it is sufficient for good men to do nothing. That is not an option. We have acted and will continue to do so. And we will act together. I therefore wish to congratulate the Egyptian Presidency for presidential statement S/ /PRST/2016/6, which we have just adopted. With it, we move from words to deeds.Today we are taking a step forward to address the perverse narrative of terror. Today we also begin to take concerted measures that will allow us, as we agreed a few moments ago, to present a proposal by 30 April 2017 for a "comprehensive international framework", with recommended guidelines and good practices that will endow the international community wth an effective tool for presenting a common front. As skilful as terrorists have shown themselves to be, we cannot send a more attractive message than if we act together. To that end, we need to act on several fronts,

First, with respect to terrorism, States have an obligation to prevent their propaganda and self-aggrandizement, starting by criminalizing justifications of incitement to terrorism. In that context, it is necessary to monitor and prevent the action of those engaged in justifying and inciting terrorism within social organizations, schools or religious centres. We must also prevent such action in the new information technologies, the Internet and social networks. To do so, we will need both appropriate legislation and the decisive action and support of social partners. In the case of new information technologies, it is essential to ensure the cooperation of suppliers of services in removing contents of a criminal nature. Today, we have made specific commitments to that end.

Secondly, it is clear that the international community must also engage and win the battle of ideas. In this context, we must address both the dissemination of proposals that directly serve and support terrorism and the narratives of violent extremism that, at least sometimes, do not qualify in themselves as criminal. In this case, the action that we must undertake is of a different character; we need to challenge ideas and counter them with a positive narrative.

It is necessary to counteract and destroy the image that terrorists seek to depict of themselves and their sympathizers. In the case of terrorists and violent extremists who cite religious belief as the foundation of their activities, it is necessary to counter them with the testimony of true religious leaders. The aim is to point out the falsity of the arguments of those terrorist groups, their lack of a genuine religious basis and the fact that they distort the messages of religion to serve their purposes and objectives of totalitarian political domination.

Along with this, the international community must promote the positive values that underpin it: peaceful coexistence, pluralism, the freedom of each person to choose the ideas and principles that to guide his or her life, the freedom of belief and ideas, and the freedom of opinion. These are the values that most humans cherish. It is important to put them on the front line of the defence of our societies and to set them against the intolerance and hate propaganda of terrorists and violent extremist groups.

In that respect, our task remains mainly in the context of combating and preventing violent extremism. The question is to counter false ideas with the concepts of coexistence and pluralism championed by our citizens and our societies. This is therefore a long-term objective whose results will be seen after a lengthy process, but we need to start today. in undertaking this task, we need to rely on the support of community leaders, religious leaders, teachers and educators, opinion-makers, human rights activists and the media, as well as families.

We know that in society itself — in civil society — there are moral forces and authoritative voices that rise against terrorism and violent extremism, and we must identify those voices. Besides having leaders and credible and authoritative voices, it is important to integrate the groups and communities that undertstand the problems and wish to contribute their proposals: young people, women, students and civil society organizations. Governments should not only consult each other, but also provide to social agents that promote peace and understanding with the support and platforms they need.

Here I wish to make special mention of the important role that victims of terrorism can play in the development and implementation of an effective counter-narrative through a threefold approach: ending the suffering; stopping the cycle of hatred by renouncing revenge; and giving moral force to the rule of law and its institutions, in which they place their trust for justice. On the basis of the national experience of my own country, Spain, I would like to present some concrete proposals towards that end.

In the field of prevention, Spain as sponsor of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations and a founding member of the King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue, attaches great importance to intercultural and interfaith dialogue as a tool for the prevention of violent radicalization and for countering the narrative of extremism violence and terrorism. In this sense, the recent Global Forum of the Alliance of Civilizations, held in Baku, the Foreign Minister of Spain presented several proposals in this area, of which I would highlight three.

The first is The creation of a committee for tolerance and positive messages on the Internet as a public-private supranational collegiate body of the major Internet companies, which would serve for the effective and rapid dissemination of images, videos and games promoting tolerance and respect between cultures and religions. The voices of peace must be heard louder than hatred. The second is the development of guidelines for good practices in education and diversity for social integration so that they can be known and developed by all countries. The third is a platform of religious leaders for peace, especially in conflict zones.

There is also great potential for actions within the framework of United Nations and various regional structures. In this regard, I stress that it would be very valuable to proceed to strengthening the United Nations Victims of Terrorism Support Portal, which is already widely known and, with the necessary support, could be a useful tool in the fields of education, schools and teaching academies for the purpose we are discussing today.

I believe that this debate cannot be completely separated from initiatives being promoted and negotiated almost in parallel, such as the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism and the forthcoming review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. Moreover, this goal is also being sought in the efforts resulting from the White

House Summit on Countering Violent Extremism and the Global Leaders' Summit on Countering the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and Violent Extremism.

In this process, the international community has come together forcefully on the goals we must achieve and the most important measures we must take. Those proposals for the fight against violent extremism also have direct relevance to the development of narratives to counter the narratives and ideologies of terrorism and violent extremism. It is true that there have been differences over the interpretation of the phenomenon of violent extremism and the conditions that may fuel and drive its development driving, but I believe that even as we continue discussing these differences of interpretation, it is also important that we focus on the points of agreement on practical actions. In that regard, I think it would be important to pursue this joint effort of reflection through regional conferences, which may be more fruitful in finding a way to agree on action programmes on the basis of the broad agreement within the international community .

It would also be important to convene a dialogue among neighbouring regions that share the problem of countering the narratives and ideologies of terrorism — a dialogue to exchange views on common challenges. In that regard, as a representative of a European country and a member of the European Union, I think that Europe would have a great interest in holding such a dialogue and serious exchange of proposals with our neighbours in the southern Mediterranean and other regions, such as the Sahel, the countries of sub-Saharan Africa or Asia.

At the same time, similar dialogues and exchanges in this field could be launched in other regional and interregional spaces. In Spain, and through our Casa Arabe, we have begun a special experiment, inviting Arab countries to present their strategies against violent radicalism. The first such case was that of Mauritania, which informed us of the experience of that country, which has been especially successful in reintegrating former terrorists through its prison programmes. Other cases will follow. This process would benefit from United Nations participation to unify proposals and follow up on the agreements reached. As noted in similar contexts, the appointment of a special rrepresentative of the Secretary-General to counter and prevent violent extremism would strengthen the international community's reponse capacities.

I believed that this procedural approach — based on a simple agreement of the international community, as reflected in today's meeting, to launch a practical discussion aimed at developing effective programmes in a broader regional context — could be the basis for drafting a comprehensive international strategy with which to counter the narratives and ideologies of terrorist groups. In this sense, if the desired results are obtained, the Security Council could meet again within a year to finalize and adopt such a strategy.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I give the floor to the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan.

Mr. Sugiyama (Japan): I would first like to express my sincere appreciation to you, Sir, for taking up this timely and important topic. My appreciation also goes to Deputy Secretary-General Eliasson and other speakers for their insightful briefings at a time when the topic before us is the most important item on the common international agenda.

My Government is sincerely and firmly supportive of the presidential statement S/PRST/2016/6, which we have just adopted.

This year alone we have witnessed numerous terrorist attacks all over the world. Facing the sobering reality of an increase in and the spread of terrorist attacks in recent years, Japan has reconfirmed its determination to fight against terrorism in cooperation with the international community. The importance of utilizing all tools at our disposal in the fight against terrorism cannot be overstated. We would particularly like to emphasize that the international community should put more efforts and resources into the prevention of terrorism, as well as countering factors conducive to terrorism, most critical of all violent extremism. We firmly believe that violent extremism has nothing to do with any religion, nationality or civilization. However, terrorist organizations use narratives and ideologies based on their distorted interpretation of those factors, not only to justify their ideas but also to mobilize resources and garner support.

There is therefore urgent need to prevent violent extremism throughout the world. In that regard, we strongly welcome the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism and call for its rapid implementation under United Nations leadership. In particular, the Security Council has made enormous efforts to eradicate these imminent threats against international peace and security, namely, terrorism and violent extremism. I would like to emphasize that it must make further efforts for that purpose.

Japan has been supporting efforts by United Nations entities in countering violent extremism. I would like to briefly touch on one example that, although it may appear small, substantively is quite imporant. A workshop held for Iraqi officials in February 2015 under the sponsorship of my Government brought together victims of terrorism and family members of late fighters of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) (Da'esh) and offered them an opportunity to engage in dialogue about their personal experiences and thoughts. The participants came to a common understanding about the fighters' irrational decisions to join ISIL (Da'esh). It was then shared with the local community as part of the effort to counter ISIL (Da'esh) narratives.

Japan also supports a whole-of-society approach to preventing violent extremism. Japan recently provided $1.5 million to the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund in order to support local community-based initiatives against violent extremism. Furthermore, Japan has conducted a number of projects related to countering violent extremism in cooperation with countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. Last February, Japan hosted a panel discussion on the role of civil society in preventing violent extremism, with the participation of representatives from Governments and civil society from South-East Asian countries. There emerged a general consensus among the participants that we should be more vocal in promoting moderate ideas against violent extremism. Again, those may be small efforts, but they are important ones.

It is now time for the international community to unite against the threat of violent extremism even further and to take advantage of our strengths and cooperate to create synergies among our efforts. We would also reiterate the importance of empowering moderate voices in society by promoting pluralism and tolerance. Prime Minister Abe mentioned in Cairo last year the importance of moderation, a notion shared by different civilizations, cultures and religious beliefs. He did so stating,

(*spoke in Arabic*)

"the best way to go is in the middle."

(*spoke in English*)

At the same time, we believe that such efforts must be conducted in full accordance with all the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, including the peaceful resolution of disputes, the rule of law and respect for human rights.

In about a fortnight, Japan will host the Group of Seven (G-7) Summit. As this year's Chair, we are taking the lead in preparing the G-7 action plan on countering terrorism and violent extremism, hopefully to be adopted by the G-7 leaders at Ise-Shima, Japan. Our aim is to create an action-oriented plan that could be a valuable addition by the G-7 leaders to existing global efforts to tackle terrorism and violent extremism. At the moment, we are working very hard and wholeheartedly with our G-7 colleagues so that we can share something with the entire international community in that regard.

To conclude, I would like to emphasize once again our deep conviction that we will not be idle in eradicating violent extremism and will redouble our efforts against it. Let us unite to address this common threat. On behalf fo the Government of Japan, I can assure the Assembly that we Japanese continue to stand firmly with the entire international community in this important endeavor.

Mr. Liu Jieyi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China appreciates Egypt's initiative to convene this open Security Council debate on countering the narratives and ideologies of terrorism. China also welcomes Foreign Minister Selim's presiding over this meeting. I thank the Foreign Ministers and Deputy Foreign Ministers who have come here today to participate in the meeting. Thank Deputy Secretary-General Eliasson for his briefing. I also listened carefully to the statements made by Secretary-General Afifi and Vice-President Crown.

Terrorism constitutes a grave threat to international peace and security and is a common challenge for humankind. The international community should resolutely combat terrorism, wherever and whenever it occurs and whatever form or manifestation it may take. A unified standard should be adhered to and no link should be made to any particular ethnic group or religion. Efforts should be made to abide by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, build consensus among Member States, take coordinated and concerted actions, integrate political, economic, legal, cultural and educational measures and commit to eliminating breeding grounds for terrorism.

At present, terrorist and extremist forces are taking advantage of new technologies, such as the Internet and social media, to deliberately distort religious doctrines, propagate terrrorist ideology and extremism and incite hatred, discrimination and violence. A portion of the population in some countries, youth in particular, are swayed by terrorist ideology and extremism to commit extreme and terrorist acts that inflict severe harm. That has become a prominent trend in the current fight against terrorism. The international community should pay close attention to that and join hands to address it.

First, it is imperative to eradicate the foundations of terrorist ideology. Terrorism is rooted in terrorist ideology and violent extremism. All countries should incorporate counter-terrorism into their national security and development strategies; oppose the use of distorted religious doctrines or any other means to incite hatred, discrimination, violence and other extremist behaviour; and resolutely combat such narratives and behaviour. Efforts must be made to follow the law and close down places used to spread and disseminate terrorist ideologies and extremism, while offenders must be held accountable. We should launch anti-terrorist publicity campaigns to increase public awareness about counter-terrorism.

Secondly, we must cut off the channels used for spreading terrorist ideologies. New technologies, such as the Internet and social media, have been used by terrorists as a new platform to spread terrorist ideologies and extremism. The international community must take effective measures to prevent terrorist organizations from using the Internet to disseminate audiovisual materials to incite violence; spread terrorist ideologies and extremism; and recruit for, finance, plan and carry out terrorist activities. All countries must strengthen their relevant legislation and law enforcement, step up their Internet surveillance and control and prohibit the transmission of and effectively delete information containing terrorist and extremist content. Internet providers must increase their self-discipline and raise their legal awareness and sense of responsibility by taking the initiative to take down the relevant content in a timely manner.

Thirdly, we must enhance cooperation and strengthen the international counter-terrorism network. In combating the spread of terrorist ideologies and extremism, the primary responsibility of national Governments should be clarified and the leading and coordinating role of the United Nations and the Security Council must be brought into full play. All parties should fully implement the relevant Security Council resolutions and enhance information exchanges, border control and law-enforcement cooperation; combat terrorist organizations' cross-border training and their export and spread of terrorist ideologies and extremism to other countries; and thwart the cross-border movement of terrorists.

Fourthly, it is essential to promote dialogue among civilizations and build a new type of international relations. Dialogue and exchanges are an effective means to promote understanding among different civilizations, religions and cultures, bolster mutual inclusiveness and achieve common development. The United Nations and the international community should vigorously promote dialogue among civilizations characterized by mutual respect, openness and inclusiveness; advocate learning among the various civilizations; foster a social environment favouring equal treatment and harmonious coexistence among the different ethnic groups, cultures and religions; construct a new type of international relations centred on win-win cooperation and build a common destiny for humankind.

China is an important member of the international counter-terrorism front. Not long ago, China promulgated a counter-terrorism law and thereby committed itself to stepping up the fight against terrorism and promoting international cooperation in that field. As is clearly set out in the counter-terrorism law, importance must be attached to countering the narratives and ideologies of terrorism and extremism, fighting against extremism in all its forms and manifestations that seeks to incite hatred and discrimination and advocate violence by distorting religious doctrines or other means, thereby removing the ideological foundation of terrorism.

In conformity with the provisions of that law, China will prevent and fight against terrorism, maintain State security and the safety of its people and their properties, actively take part in and promote bilateral and multilateral counter-terrorism corporation, resolutely counter the narratives and ideologies of terrorism and advance international counter-terrorism cooperation to make continued progress in a common effort to maintain world peace and stability.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): Allow me to start by thanking Egypt for having undertaken this initiative of organizing this very important debate. I would also like to thank all the briefers for their extremely enlightening presentations. Inviting the Secretary-General of Al Azhar Islamic Research Academy and the Vice-President and Deputy General Counsel of the Microsoft Corporation is an eloquent illustration of the United Nations desire to strengthen its partnership with civil society — some will say to embrace a world that is increasingly post-Westphalian, with its risks but also with the opportunities that flow from it.

I assure the Foreign Minister of Egypt of France's sympathy and solidarity following the attack that plunged Cairo into mourning last Sunday.

France associates itself with the statement to be delivered later by the observer of the European Union.

While significant successes has been achieved in recent months in the fight against Da'esh in Iraq and Syria, that group's propaganda unfortunately continues to exert an important pull on our people. In France more than 2,000 citizens or residents are involved in the Iraqi-Syrian terrorist networks, and nearly 9,300 people have been reported to the authorities for radicalization. Globally, it is estimated that nearly 30,000 foreign terrorist fighters from close to 100 countries have joined the Iraqi-Syrian theatre.

The propaganda of terrorist groups, particularly Da'esh, seeks to convince by painting an ideal, but false, world. As French Prime Minister Manuel Valls has stated,

> "An ideology of chaos is afoot. It glorifies death and corrupts the ideals at the very heart of our societies."

Its recruiters deceive young people by promising them a future, an ideal or a cause to defend. But in fact they end up experiencing only manipulation, cruelty and death. Terrorist groups use mind control techniques to get young people to reject their schools, their work and even their families.

Despite the recent decline in the number of messages and videos posted by Da'esh, the Internet remains the recruitment channel favoured by terrorists. They have refined their indoctrination techniques and exploit its full potential: sites defending terrorism, discussion forums, direct messaging services, videos and social networks. For them, the Internet is the way to massively spread their propaganda and present young people with a message tailored to those they wish to capture in their nets.

Faced with a threat of this magnitude, the international community must take action to break this large-scale recruitment and indoctrination exercise. We must fight terrorism and resolutely counter its propaganda of hatred with the greatest determination and with the necessary means and always with the weapons of the law and with respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. For it is precisely those rights that terrorists want to destroy because they lie at the heart of our democracies.

The French approach is based on two axes. The first dimension is preventive and dissuasive. It is based on countering influences and taking actions aimed at delegitimizing Da'esh in the eyes of potential recruits and the public. As an example, in January France created the www.stop-djihadism.gouv.fr website, aimed at the families and friends of those on the path of radicalization, which was then supplemented by a Twitter account and a Facebook page. It is not simply aimed at the propaganda Da'esh, but also at that of Al-Qaida and Boko Haram. Similarly, France has set up a free hot line, which is accessible 24 hours a day, to enable families and friends to report their concerns to the authorities. France's plan of action against radicalization and terrorism, which was just updated on 9 May, provides 50 new concrete measures to improve its understanding of the phenomenon and further strengthen its prevention policies. For example, the cutting off of any source of financing for those who join the ranks of terrorists. We will intensify our strategic communications efforts within the framework of the new action plan. At the international level, France actively supports the work of the Global Coalition to Counter the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, which has produced some highly effective communications campaigns, particularly through the Sawab Centre. But beyond Governments' necessary stance and commitment, the effectiveness of our action also depends on mobilizing civil society. We must expose the contradictions of terrorist groups on the ground, and that requires boldness, innovation and the ability to mobilize society as whole — public authorities, associations and the private sector.

The second aspect of France's approach is punitive, involving blocking websites and removing content while respecting fundamental human rights and freedoms. A law enacted on 13 November 2014 enables the administrative authority to require Internet service providers to block access to sites hosted in France that advocate terrorism, and 60 have been blocked so far. The PHAROS reporting platform enables Internet users to report findings of illegal content, which are then transmitted to police, gendarmerie or customs special services.

Finally, since early 2015 France has had a close and constant dialogue with the major Internet players — Microsoft, whose presence here today I welcome, but also Facebook, Twitter and Google. That dialogue has been further strengthened in the wake of the attacks of 13 November in order to urge all Internet businesses to take responsibility. Those tragic events have in fact enabled us to see where social networks can play a catalytic role in mobilizing society.

Today's debate enables us to send two main messages. The first is that the United Nations has a major part to play in combating terrorism in general and Da'esh in particular. That is the message of resolution 2249 (2015), which the Council adopted unanimously, at France's initiative, on 20 November, exactly a week after the Paris attacks, and which outlines the framework for our shared fight against Da'esh in particular. The second is that the United Nations has a unique role to play in mobilizing the international community and civil society against terrorist ideologies and narratives. In that fight, our great diversity is our best asset for bringing to bear the values that we hold in common and that lie at the heart of the United Nations.

In urging the international community to redouble its efforts to counter terrorist propaganda with the help of the private sector, civil society and stakeholders on the ground, the presidental statement we have just adopted (S/PRST/2016/6) will enable us to further deepen that mobilization and to usefully supplement the Secretary-General's call for developing a United Nations communications strategy for preventing violent extremism, as described in his January Plan of Action (A/70/674). France will continue to play its full part in those efforts.

Mr. Rycroft (United Kingdom): At the outset, I would like to join you, Mr. President, and others in expressing our condolences to the families of all those killed in recent terrorist attacks. I would also like to thank the Deputy Secretary-General and the Secretary-General of Al Azhar Islamic Research Academy for their briefings.

I often say that the Security Council needs to hear more frequently from those working on the front lines of the challenges we face, and it is a sign of the sophistication of the threats that the Internet is now one such front line. I therefore very much welcome Mr. Crown to the Council and pay tribute to the work he does at the Global Network Initiative and all that it does to protect freedom of expression on the Internet. Microsoft is a brand that we all recognize and understand. The same could be said of our brand — the United Nations — or the Security Council.

But, sadly, the same can also be said of Da'esh. For the disaffected, the disillusioned, the vulnerable, the Da'esh brand has a terrifying ability to connect and persuade. It offers a false promise of empowerment, identity and belonging. It claims to offer a new society, mandated through a perverse interpretation of one of the world's great religions. It even has its own logo. The black flag is globally recognized, revered by the few, feared by the many.

The engine of that brand is, without doubt, the Internet. It has been hijacked to spread the hateful messages of Da'esh in ways previously thought impossible, to reach audiences previously though inaccessible. That is true in my country as much as it is in any of those represented around this table. Take the case of Adnan Mahmoud, a student from Lancashire in the North of England. Through the Internet, he was drawn to the Da'esh brand. He searched for graphic videos of Da'esh's brutality and shared them in an effort to indoctrinate others. The Internet was just the start. Spurred on by what he had seen online, he sought it out in the real world and flew to Turkey in September 2014 to join Da'esh in Syria.

How can we respond to that horrific abuse of the Internet? How can we show vulnerable people like Mr. Mahmoud that there is an alternative to the Da'esh brand? Our approach in response must involve the whole of our societies. It is not just about Governments; it is about harnessing the expertise of local communities, civil society and religious leaders. Those groups bring credibility and authenticity that can counter the narratives of groups such as Da'esh. A whole-of-society approach also means partnerships with technology companies, to help us reclaim the space that Da'esh has occupied on social media. To be clear, that does not mean coercing or restricting tech companies; we cannot beat Da'esh by censoring or restricting access to social media. Instead, we must work together to amplify voices that can persuade, inform and, ultimately, undermine the Da'esh brand. To defeat a network, we need a network.

The United Nations has a vital role to play in that effort. Our Organization has a unique ability to convene interested parties, as you have done today, Mr. President. It has a unique ability to share emerging evidence of what works, so that we can all learn from one another's best practices. And it is the ability of the United Nations to build longer-term resilience at sub-national, national and regional levels that will ensure that there is a long-term solution to the threat posed by violent extremism. That is why the United Kingdom firmly endorses the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (A/70/674). We call on all States to implement its vital recommendations, many of which bolster the objectives outlined in the presidential statement (S/PRST/2016/6) we have adopted today.

Outside the United Nations, the United Kingdom will also play its part. As co-Chair of the Global Coalition to Counter the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant in its efforts to tackle Da'esh propaganda, we have invested more than $14 million in the Coalition's communications cell in London. We are not alone. Our partners from Bahrain, Canada, Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands are helping to run the cell, and we are working extremely closely with the United States and the United Arab Emirates. Together, we are taking the propaganda fight to Da'esh, and we know that it is working. Da'esh's media output from Syria has dropped considerably. For every Da'esh supporter on Twitter, we now see at least six Twitter handles speaking out against them. We would like everyone to join them in tweeting about #DefeatingDaesh.

In conclusion, of course we cannot be complacent. The challenges ahead still remain significant, but there are some grounds for optimism. To illustrate that, I would like to return to the story of Mr. Mahmoud. Thanks to the love of his family, he never made it to Syria. His brother used Twitter to reach Adnan just before he crossed the border. He persuaded him to return to the United Kingdom to take responsibility for his actions. His brother was that vital, credible voice needed to show Adnan that there was an alternative — and, of course, it was the Internet that enabled him to do so. As we continue our fight against Da'esh, I hope that we can all keep that story firmly in our minds.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Mr. Minister, we are grateful to the delegation of Egypt for the very timely initiative of convening this open debate on the theme of "Countering the narratives and ideologies of terrorism". We regard this meeting as an important contribution to Security Council efforts within the broad agenda of international counter-terrorist cooperation.

We are grateful to the briefers for their substantial contributions to the discussion.

The growth of radicalism of late has, to a large extent, been fed and fuelled by unprecedented terrorist propaganda, aimed primarily at youth and the socially underprivileged strata of the population. It constantly takes on new shapes and adapts to the potentials offered by modern technologies, such as the Internet. Terrorists are spreading a perverted ideology of intransigence and violence not related to any of the religions. Despite that, there is, unfortunately, a demand for such ideas, which is demonstrated, for example, by the large-scale recruitment of foreign terrorists fighters into the ranks of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) (Da'esh) and associated terrorist groups.

What is required are effective recipes for responses to those dangerous trends. Currently, the time has come to accumulate the resources and expertise of the international community to erect a bulwark against terrorist ideology.

We are convinced of the need for the organic incorporation of preventive measures into the broader counter-terrorist efforts. That work must be carried out on the basis of international law and Security Council resolutions and must be free of double standards and any division of terrorists into good ones and bad ones. States cooperation must be based on the existing international legal framework and the Global Counter-Terrorist Strategy. It is of fundamental importance that the Council continue to focus on such important tasks as combating radicalization and the incitement to terrorism and countering the use of the media, the Internet and social networks for terrorist practices.

The decisive role in combating the ideologies of terrorism, just like in all counter-terrorist actions, must reside with States and their relevant agencies. At the same time, State agencies must, in a targeted way, also seek to involve the efforts and potential of non-governmental organizations and civil society, religious communities, academia, educational institutions, the mass media and the business community.

In our country, priority attention is being paid to effectively countering terrorist ideology and preventing the radicalization of political and social forces through its influence. Those tasks have become pressing in the light of the unprecedented propaganda and mobilization campaign being mounted by international terrorists, first and foremost ISIL (Da'esh) and Jabhat Al-Nusra.

Preventive counter-terrorist work traditionally actively includes religious representatives, eminent theologians and leading experts in the field of law and religion. The Government provides the necessary support to public associations acting in favour of strengthening interfaith and inter-ethnic trust. National cultural events and social programmes are being organized, including interregional youth forums in the North Caucasus and seasonal youth clubs. Successful examples of such efforts, with the involvement of civil society, include the Peace for the Children of the Caucasus project and the International Theological Conference with the participation of religious representatives from our country, the Commonwealth of Independent States and Africa. The introduction of a course entitled "Fundamentals of Religious Cultures and Secular Ethics" into the curricula of Russian schools was also quite successful. There is also the regular preparation of publications for the mass media and the posting online on various Internet sites of various materials explaining the criminal essence of terrorist organizations.

We welcome the presidential statement (S/PRST/2016/6) adopted upon Egypt's initiative, which quite rightly underscores the Security Council's priorities in the field of counter-terrorism. The United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee is entrusted with the task of preparing and submitting, in a timely manner, for the Council's consideration a "comprehensive international framework" containing a set of recommendations to counter the pseudo-ideology of ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaeda and associated groups.

We intend to participate actively in the elaboration of that document and stand ready to provide support to the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate in that regard. We expect that, in the process of agreeing and implementing the "comprehensive international framework", we will fully utilize the positive experience of the work on Security Council resolution 1624 (2005) on combating the incitement to terrorism. We view the adopted presidential statement as a significant contribution to the process of implementing that resolution.

Mr. Seck (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): The convening of this second open debate on terrorism, in line with the one held under the Chinese presidency (see S/PV.7670) in April, constitutes — if there ever was such a need — eloquent proof of the special attention that our Council devotes to the scourge afflicting modern times, namely, violent extremism and its corollary, terrorism.

That is why, Mr. Minister, the Senegalese delegation is gratified to see you preside personally over this meeting and wishes to convey its sincere gratitude to Egypt for the opportunity afforded us to engage in an in-depth exercise in considering ways and means to more effectively tackle that pernicious threat to international peace and security.

We also thank the Deputy Secretary-General and our briefers, Mr. Modi El-Din Afifi, Secretary-General of the Al-Azhar Islamic Research Academy and Mr. Steven Crown, Vice President and Deputy General Counsel of the Microsoft Corporation for their statements. The delegation of Senegal also associates itself with the statement that will be made by the representative of Kuwait on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

With the development of information and communication technologies, terrorist groups have become masters of using the Internet and the social media to defy States and international organizations, incite people to violence, recruit adherents and to fund and plan their heinous terrorist acts. However, as effective as their strategies have been, violent extremism and its discourse are based on an erroneous interpretation of religion and on its instrumentalization for purely criminal and material purposes. That is why we have to act together to shatter that perverse discourse, as was said so eloquently by the Secretary-General of the Al-Azhar Islamic Research Academy.

In a world that is marked by strong socioeconomic disparities within States and among them, the terrorist discourse is being manipulated by skilful propagandists claiming to embody a vision of the world based on the precepts of religion with the intent of providing the illusion, to more than just a few individuals, that they are the harbingers of hope and the providers of solutions against oppression, injustice, cultural and religious aggression.

Unfortunately, that biased narrative enables the so-called Islamic State and other extremist groups to recruit foreign terrorists fighters from nearly a hundred countries. In fact, the current estimate is that there are 30,000 such fighters. To stem that flow of foreign terrorist fighters requires of us, Member States, that we be more diligent in implementing the relevant provisions of Security Council resolutions 2170 (2014), 2178 (2014) and 2253 (2015).

Senegal is part of the Sahel-Saharan region. That is a region faced with the development of violent extremism that is fuelled by ignorance, poverty and exploits the foibles and weaknesses of the international system. Terrorist groups are attempting to take hold of whole swaths of territory and undermine existing States. That calls for the urgent adoption of preventive and repressive measures to counter such violent extremism of a religious nature and its corollary, terrorism.

For its part, Senegal has adopted an approach that is based on prevention, cooperation and rapid response. As part of our preventive strategy, my country gives pride of place to education, information and communication and focuses on raising the awareness of the population, as well as on dialogue with opinion leaders, notably religious leaders, whose role is essential when it comes to countering the extremist discourse. That policy is based on sociological data and secular values, such as tolerance and respect for diversity. Senegal is a secular State that attaches great importance to dialogue between cultures and religions, which can ensure cohesion and perfect harmony between ethnicities and faiths.

However, in a globalized world and given the scale of the threats, no country alone can confront the threat of terrorism in a sustainable manner, especially given its increasingly sophisticated and violent attacks. Aware of that fact, the Ministers responsible for domestic security of Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Mali and Senegal, following the wave of bloody terrorist attacks that struck the West African subregion, including the Radisson Hotel in Bamako on 20 November, the Splendide Hotel in Ouagadougou on 15 January, and in Grand-Bassam in Côte d'Ivoire on 13 March, met in Abidjan on 24 March with the goal of coordinating their actions in order to devise an appropriate response to that scourge. They agreed to pool their efforts to strengthen the relations between the national security services in order to establish unity of action and cooperation between security forces and to hold regular meetings to update the information that they have regarding terrorism in their respective States and to publish a monthly bulletin regarding criminal acts of a terrorist nature. A meeting will be held in the near future on fighting Boko Haram. Next week in Dakar, we will organize a subregional seminar for the West African, Central African and the Sahel and Saharan regions on the fight against religious extremism and on border monitoring and control.

In order to ensure its effectiveness, any action aimed at countering terrorism and violent extremism must address both the cultural and the structural causes. Those causes are numerous and include marginalization, discrimination, poor governance and the absence of socioeconomic prospects. Repressive measures must, therefore, include a number of preventive and dissuasive measures, including ones that will have a strong social impact aimed at reducing exclusion, marginalization and discrimination. The policies adopted, if they are to be sustainable, must be coupled with good governance, the respect for human rights, improving the conditions of life of the population, and the building of peaceful and inclusive societies.

It is in that spirit that a number of actions seem pertinent to us in the fight against the extremist discourse and violence of terrorist groups. We need to set up religious-training establishments that are in keeping with our perceptions and religious practice and that are marked by tolerance and solidarity. We need to educate, train and inform the citizens and the communities, so as to enable them to resist fallacious ideologies. We need to stress the real nature of terrorist groups, which are nothing more than mafia-like organizations, with a view to exposing their lack of credibility. We need to respond to the rhetoric of terrorists and extremist groups by underscoring the illegitimate nature of their discourse in religious terms.

However, in addition to such good practices, which are not in themselves enough to block the violent and extremist discourse of terrorist groups, we must give people, especially young people, good reasons as well as the means to remain with their families and in their own country rather than to seek adventure outside, beyond our borders, which often has very tragic consequences.

The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, which will be reviewed next month, as well as the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (A/70/674), are, in our view, appropriate frameworks, as they contain the necessary elements to counter the discourse and odious ideology of terrorists. Those frameworks will, however, have to be interpreted in terms of partnership and cooperation at the subregional, regional and international levels. At a national level, it is important for Member States to be inspired by the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to adopt, in full exercise of their sovereignty, national plans of action and national strategies inspired by local specificities and better tailored to their socioeconomic and security needs. The assistance of the international community and the United Nations will, of course, be necessary in that regard.

In conclusion, I would like to indicate that the Senegalese delegation has worked with the Egyptian delegation to ensure the elaboration and adoption this morning of the presidential statement (S/PRST/2016/6).

Mr. Yelchenko (Ukraine): At the outset, I would like to join others in expressing our sincere gratitude to the Egyptian delegation and to you personally, Mr. Minister, for convening this debate. Also please accept our condolences in connection with the bloody terrorist attack committed in Cairo on Sunday.

Our thanks also go to the briefers, who have provided us with valuable information concerning the current trends and policies applied in the field of countering terrorist narratives and propaganda by the United Nations, Member States and civil society actors.

Terrorist and violent extremist ideologies, which have been propagated all over the world by terrorist entities, the most well-known being the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals and groups, nowadays pose a serious threat to international peace and security, as well as to stability in the world. They threaten our core values and principles, including democracy, human rights, the rule of law, equal opportunity and freedom.

Notwithstanding the recent tentative progress in the suppression of those international terrorist threats, especially by depriving the terrorist organizations of some sources of their financing, there is still a significant lack of cohesive actions with regard to countering their propaganda while ensuring effective implementation of resolutions 1373 (2001), 1624 (2005) and 2178 (2014). Achieving that goal will be possible only through a comprehensive framework of concrete strategies aimed at consolidating all existing efforts and strengthening cooperation among all stakeholders, including Governments, civil society and the private sector, so as to improve their understanding of the ways in which terrorists use information and communications technologies (ICT) for terrorist purposes. That will make possible the application of a unified approach to deterring the use of the Internet and social media to incite people to terrorism, train and recruit foreign terrorist fighters, and plan and finance terrorist activities.

To strike at the heart of the aggressive informational campaigns of terrorists aimed at the recruitment of new followers and sympathizers, the strategy of the international community should involve not just countering the ideologies of such groups, which are being distributed through the Internet, but also developing persuasive context-specific counter-narratives and messages to neutralize the terrorists' influence on persons belonging to the target audiences and to eliminate the terrorists' focal points for radicalization. That is where civil society and, in particular, representatives of local communities and religious leaders, could play a crucial role in raising public awareness by revealing the truth about would-be jihadists and by de-glorifying their activities. To monitor the threat posed by the use of ICT for terrorist purposes, to collect, identify and share good practices developed in this field worldwide and to mobilize resources for building required capacities, we need to establish a strengthened international cooperation mechanism that would engage relevant United Nations counter-terrorism entities, acting within the all-of-United Nations approach, together with regional and subregional organizations.

It goes without saying that counter-measures would not have long-lasting effects without removing the root causes of the threat of violent extremism and terrorism. Having put out the fire in one place in the world, there is no guarantee that an outbreak will not occur elsewhere. Our collective response should be focused on addressing underlying factors that create opportunities for violent extremist and terrorist ideologies to spread and thrive.

Only by combining more nuanced and comprehensive countering and prevention measures that address governance deficit, promote social development and dialogue and respect for the rule of law and human rights, develop strategic communications, engage women and youth and expand public-private partnerships can we reduce the appeal of and support for terrorist groups and enhance resilience against them. In this respect, we note with appreciation the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (A/70/674), add our voice in support of further consideration of the Plan during the review process of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy this June, and look forward to extensive discussions on how it can enhance the existing comprehensive counter-terrorism architecture.

While addressing the need to intensify our common work on preventing the spread of malevolent ideologies, we should explore ways to engage young people, who constitute one of the strata that are most vulnerable to violent extremist and terrorist narratives. There are many factors contributing to youth radicalization; one of the most important is propaganda. Violent extremist and terrorist groups actively exploit this tool through media and social networks. In our opinion, the most dangerous situation emerges when such manipulations are elevated to the rank of State policies.

Under international law States are obliged to refrain from engaging in acts of terrorism and to work to prevent them. An essential element of both these obligations is the necessity of countering terrorist ideological propaganda. This observation should be taken into consideration while assessing States' input on combating terrorism.

For more than two years, Ukraine has suffered from the aggression of its neighbour, the Russian Federation. Russia has temporarily occupied and attempted to illegally annex a part of the territory of Ukraine — the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol — and continues hostile and subversive actions, supporting terrorism in the Donbas region. Russia employs a broad range of hybrid warfare techniques, including financing terrorism, to promote ideology of the so-called Russian world, which implies an exclusive role for the Russian Federation in the internal affairs of the countries that were once part of the Russian empire or the former Soviet Union as well as in shaping their foreign policy priorities. This neo-imperialist ideology tolerates and encourages violation of international law and human rights and the perpetration of serious crimes, including terrorists acts. Fierce, deceitful propaganda disseminated by the State-controlled Russian media is one of the key elements of the ongoing hybrid aggression against Ukraine.

The international community should be alarmed by the fact that this hybrid propaganda machine based on Soviet and czarist experience and other totalitarian concepts continues to work very well and in an effective manner, affecting, first and foremost, young people. There are reported cases of teenagers' participation in the activities of Russian-backed terrorist organizations — the so-called Donetsk People's Republic and Luhansk People's Republic — that have on several occasions attacked civilians in certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine, using arms and munitions supplied by the Russian Federation. Some of the perpetrators are 15-years-old or even younger.

There is also credible information that the Russian proxies and their Kremlin masters are forcing pupils and students into their ranks using different means of influence, including religious organizations. Moreover, there is plentiful evidence that such means as promising to annul criminal records or repay loans are used in the Russian campaign to recruit mercenaries into the terrorist gangs operating in the Donbas. Young people are common victims of such recruitment campaigns. Therefore, apart from comprehensive efforts to eliminate the social, economic, cultural, religious and other grounds for the spread of violent extremism and terrorism, there is a need to address such phenomena as State propaganda imbued with intolerance and hatred and information wars, which often serve as part of hybrid warfare.

We proceed from the understanding that victims of terrorism should also play an important role in the aforementioned comprehensive preventive campaign to combat extremist and terrorist ideologies and counter their narratives. The messages brought by the victims of terrorism and their family members can help us revive people's natural understanding of good and evil and disrupt terrorist information campaigns aimed at pulling the wool over people's eyes. We strongly believe that by establishing an international day of commemoration of the victims of terrorist acts we would send a strong signal about the dire consequences of terrorist activities, which are to be remembered as the lessons from the tragic past, with the ultimate goal of preventing such acts from ever recurring.

Mr. Gaspar Martins (Angola): I would like, first of all, to express our appreciation at seeing you this morning, Mr. President, as you preside over this very important and timely meeting of the Security Council. I congratulate the Egyptian delegation for organizing today's debate on a troubling issue of great concern for the international community.

We also welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs of New Zealand and the Deputy Ministers of Malaysia, Spain and Japan. We thank the Deputy Secretary-General Eliasson for his timely briefing and we also thank Mr. Crown and Mr. Afifi for their very insightful briefings, given the very important role their organizations play in the fight in which we are all engaged.

We welcome the adoption of presidential statement S/PRST/2016/6, on threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts, and commend the Egyptian delegation for the efforts deployed that have led us to its adoption by the Council this morning.

The ability acquired by terrorists to conquer and administer territories is one of the most disturbing facts in today's international reality. By exploiting religious beliefs, ethnic differences and political ideologies to legitimize their actions, the terrorists have divided nations, recruited followers and taken hold of vast territories. They are, avowedly, intent on building States, based on the most obscure irredentism.

The principal consequence of such a development has been the spread of violent extremism across vast regions of the world with a message of totalitarian intolerance of religious, cultural, social and racial diversity, posing an immense challenge to the universal values of peace, justice and human dignity, as proclaimed by the United Nations, and provoking a humanitarian crisis of catastrophic proportions.

It is against that backdrop that the international community is applying renewed determination and seeking the most suitable ways to counter this new brand of violent radical extremism and terrorism through in-depth studies of the phenomenon, refined operational tools to counter the threat, and international cooperation as a key to our success. Angola, as Chair of the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region and in partnership with the United Nations, organized in mid-February 2015 a regional seminar on terrorism, aimed at the pacification and resolution of conflicts in the Central African region, where disturbing signs of the terrorist threats are making inroads. Angola has also participated in meetings of the Southern African Development Community, which recently adopted a strategy to combat terrorism in the southern African region. These actions highlight the Angolan Government's commitment to contributing to the creation and implementation of mechanisms to combat the terrorist threat.

Violent extremism originates and thrives in specific contexts, with a number of clearly identified situations as its drivers. Radicalization and violent extremism find fertile ground poverty, unemployment, corruption and disrespect for fundamental human rights. The political and economic exclusion of ethnic and social groups, marginalization, impediments to public freedoms, poor governance, the culture of impunity, repressive policies and discrimination are some of the fundamental drivers exploited by violent extremists.

Another powerful driver, consistently invoked in their narratives, is the issue of unresolved conflicts, permitting extremists to exploit deep-rooted grievances arising from oppression or its remnants and foreign intervention. Such grievances, deeply entrenched in the ideology of violent extremist, impose the urgent need to resolve long-standing conflicts and put an end to deceptive narratives of revenge and hatred.

The most outrageous feature of today's violent extremism is the exploitation of religious belief in order to divide nations, suppress religious, cultural and ethnic diversity, and perpetrate despicable crimes in the name of religious homogeneity. In presidential statement S/PRST/2016/6, which we have adopted today, the Security Council notes how terrorist organizations such as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and Al-Qaida craft distorted narratives based on the misinterpretation and misrepresentation of religion to justify violence and recruit supporters and foreign terrorist fighters.

The Secretary-General, translating the deep concern of the international community, presented to the General Assembly at its current session his Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, as and when conducive to terrorism. Angola supports the Plan and is ready to participate in the work necessary to make it implementable. The Plan of Action acknowledges the need of concerted action in addressing terrorism beyond law enforcement, military or security measures by placing special emphasis on prevention, in particular through social and economic development, good governance, human rights and humanitarian concerns, the rule of law, combating discrimination, marginalization and exclusion.

The agenda to prevent violent extremism emphasizes the impact of action at the local, national and regional levels in a mutually reinforcing process with an all-of-United-Nations approach. In that connection, this meeting of the Security Council constitutes a valid contribution to the implementation of the Secretary-General's Plan of Action, which we again welcome.

The Deputy Secretary-General this morning clearly reminded us of the particular role that young people have to play in our deliberations. Youth is a fundamental element in this process. It is among young people, mostly the disenfranchised and poorly educated, that violent extremism thrives and is the main recruitment base for the contingent of foreign terrorist fighters. Accordingly, it is crucial to raise young people's awareness of preventing violent extremism and terrorism by securing their integration in decision-making processes, engaging in dialogue among generations, their participation in their respective communities, stepping up the struggle against poverty social marginalization, and enhancing education on respect for human rights, diversity, peaceful coexistence and tolerance.

The participation in our meeting of Mr. Mohi El-Din Afifi and Mr. Steven Crown is very welcome indeed, given he pivotal role that their respective organizations can play in the successful implementation of the Secretary-General's Plan of Action and the presidential statement that we have just adopted. The ideological debate on preventing and actually countering terrorism is a vital component in the area of information technologies in order to effectively challenge and demystify the narratives propagated by violent extremists and terrorists. As the Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism states, the United Nations plays a central role in uniting the international community and giving coherence to its efforts in preventing and countering violent extremism and terrorism.

The Security Council, through the mandatory powers entrusted to it by the Charter of the United Nations, must play a crucial role in leading the international community in this decisive struggle to uphold the principles and purposes of the Charter and the universal values of peace, justice and human dignity that violent extremism and terrorism are challenging in a way unprecedented since the founding of the United Nations.

Mr. Ramírez Carreño (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): We should like at the outset to thank the delegation of Egypt for having convened today's open debate on a matter of such great importance. This meeting has elicited great interest within the international community, as evidenced by the fact that some 70 participants have asked to speak. It is also taking place concurrently with the General Assembly's review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy — a most timely juncture.

We also convey our respects to His Excellency Mr. Sameh Shokry Selim, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Arab Republic of Egypt, a country that is a friend to Venezuela. We also thank Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson; Mr. Mohi El-Din Afifi, Secretary-General of Al Azhar Islamic Research Academy; and Mr. Steven Crown, Vice-President and Deputy General Council of Microsoft for their briefings.

I join others in conveying my country's condolences to those Ministers here present in the light of the recent terrorist attacks suffered by their people, and express our unwavering rejection of such actions.

The phenomenon of terrorism is nothing new. It has appeared throughout history as the most violent political expression. That said, the subject joining us together today, as expressed in the concept note (S/2016/416, annex), is the concern that in recent years we have seen in the Middle East and North Africa the spread of terrorism and its transformation into a global phenomenon by way of the terrible attacks by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham, the Al-Nusra Front and Boko Haram, inter alia. We must therefore ask ourselves why this is happening precisely now and precisely in those regions. If we do not take the time to engage in a multidimensional analysis of the root causes of the phenomenon, we risk overlooking certain key elements as part of a discussion capable of combating the extremist and terrorism narrative.

Terrorism, as the most acute expression of violent extremism, is the result of accumulated factors that have impacted the Middle East and North Africa in recent years. The key factor, in our perspective, is the violent foreign intervention that took place in Iraq and Libya and is currently under way in Syria. As a result of such egregious interventionism, the institutional framework of those States has collapsed throughout most of their territory. That has happened not only as a result of the brutal nature of war, but rather, in many cases, as the direct objective of the invading and occupying forces.

The State, as the body responsible for all education, health care, cultural and law enforcement institutions and the armed forces, is the only entity capable of containing the spread of terrorism. Its weakening in those countries prevents it from effectively fulfilling that containment function. The destruction of the State's institutional fabric and the resulting vacuum has allowed religious sectarianism to displace the political groups that previously supported the Governments of of the Middle Eastern and North African countries that suffered foreign military interventionism, particularly Iraq and Libya, leaving the civilian population at the mercy of the influence and actions of the terrorist groups. In some cases, as we are already well aware, foreign intervention has led to the breakdown of States, including their de facto and de jure disappearance.

Another aspect to take into account in addressing the phenomenon of terrorism is the sociological outcome of the fact that those countries now have a generation of young people — entire societies — that, in the past 15 years, have known no other way of life than war and conflict. That has given rise to societies in those countries that have been traumatized by violence and become breeding grounds for young people who join non-State armed groups, militias or terrorist groups. Against that backdrop, the lack of opportunity generated by the destruction of the economy due to the ravages of interventionist wars and civil conflicts must be taken into account, as it has a major impact on young people, who see themselves trapped by poverty, frustration and despair.

Another factor that must be considered is religion. Venezuela believes that terrorism cannot and should not be ascribed with any race, religion or people. Nonetheless, we are struck by the fact that in various instances, for political and ideological ends, some elements have attempted to paint Islam as the religious and ethical source of terrorism. That is an entirely false connection and we roundly reject it. In the West, such erroneous ideas have given rise to the fact that the Islamic faith is misunderstood and misinterpreted, which has led to discrimination and persecution in certain societies.

I also note and denounce, as a basic driver of the resurgence of terrorism, the linking of terrorism to the destabilization of a given region. I refer to the strategies of various nations that promote and support the establishment of violent non-State actors, who through their actions weaken and contribute to the downfall of Governments that do not please the countries that back and in many cases finance such actors. Today, we see many of those violent non-State actors spreading throughout the region and joined the terrorist groups that are shedding blood across the Middle East and North Africa.

The lack of Governments and society's loss of capacity to come together under institutional control in the region has resulted in a scenario conducive to the proliferation of militias and other violent non-State actors, as well as those who protect, arm and finance them from abroad. The evidence is clear on that and we have all seen it. Those violent groups that enjoy access to a huge arsenal of weapons, financing and political and ideological backing are transformed into the terrorist groups.

Unfortunately, the overlap among militias, other non-State armed groups and terrorist and extremist groups in the region is becoming increasingly obtuse and confused within the dynamic of war and death. We cannot ignore that crucial factor because as long as there is no explanation as to why such groups dedicate themselves to terrorism yet enjoy extraordinary logistical and financial support, in some cases surpassing the capacities of States. Moreover, there is a huge quantity of arms that are euphemistically called "small" and "light" but often include large-bore weapons that have been hijacked or distributed by terrorist groups and flow throughout the Middle East and North Africa, sewing death among civilians.

All of the factors we have just mentioned do not explain another key aspect of the terrorism narrative. How have more than 30,000 foreign fighters entered Syria and Iraq to join the umbrella terrorist groups operating there? Why do those foreigners, many of them from Europe or the Middle East, embrace the cause of terror? What goes on in the minds of such young people in their home countries that would bring them to make such a decision? In that regard, we point to the discrimination and segregation suffered by many young people of the Muslim minority who have grown up in European societies.

Alongside all of that, we must also take into account the narrative of some Governments of the West or of the Middle East that promote propaganda and systematic attacks against countries that they wish to destabilize or in which they seek to intervene militarily. This encourages many young people outside those countries to feel that joining the Governments undermined by this narrative is a form of so-called just war in which they must participate.

Another key element that must be borne in mind is technology, which allows for the rapid and widespread dissemination of the messages of extremists and terrorists. We are stupefied to see how skillfully terrorists and extremists use the same political tools and information and communications technology that some countries use to attack others. They use such tools in what some theorists have called fourth-generation warfare — strategies which, I regret to say, have been applied to many countries in the world. What never ceases to surprise is how terrorism and extremism deploy enormous technological and communications capability to broadcast their extremist messages and ideologies with political aims and for destabilizing purposes. In that regard, it is up to technology and media companies to make efforts to prevent those platforms for being used as echo chambers for terrorism and extremism. Statements have been made that this technology is being used for espionage and political intervention. As such, the States and actors involved must assume their responsibilities so that such heinous practices are not repeated or be made available for terrorism.

The last aspect of the phenomenon of terrorism has to do with the nature of its ideology. An ideology of intolerance and violence, with little regard for life or the most fundamental values human coexistence, is a hallmark of these terrorist movements, and we must fight it in a unified manner. When it comes to this issue there must be no double standards in the Security Council. There is no such thing as good and bad terrorists. It is a matter of concern that somehow, as part of geopolitical goals on the part of some Powers on the Security Council, there is tolerance for the raising of the banners of death and terrorism and imposing a culture of death. Venezuela reiterates its categorical rejection of acts of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, whatever the motivations and wherever by whomever such acts are committed. Such actions are deliberate attacks on international peace and security, in addition to being flagrant violations of international law.

In that context, we once again underscore the importance of prevention in this exceedingly important fight. It is important to adopt measures aimed at undermining the clear strategy and ideologies of extremist groups, which have assigned themselves the task of fomenting violence and intolerance. Addressing the root causes of this odious phenomenon and developing effective and innovative strategies to counter the extremist narratives of terrorists and stimulate critical thinking in society with a view to preventing radicalization, recruitment and the mobilization of resources, including inappropriate use of information and communication technologies — that is a battle that we must wage honestly, for it is one that involves all countries in the United Nations.

Likewise, we believe that a long-term solution to the threats we face also requires finding political and peaceful solutions to the conflicts in countries such as Syria, Libya and Yemen and to the Palestinian question. Those prolonged crises further exacerbate conflicts and serve as a breeding ground for violent extremism and terrorism, transnational crime, the flow of financial resources for the recruitment and training of foreign terrorist fighters, thereby improving the capacity of terrorist groups to act.

Lastly, we believe that the international community must continue to develop, implement and strengthen strategies adapted to each individual case and national circumstances with a view to eliminate the ability of terrorist groups to act, all the while with strict respect for the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. In that regard, we believe that the adoption of a future convention against terrorism would serve as a complement to the host of existing international legal instruments by arriving at a definition that makes it possible to strengthen consensus in this domain.

Mr. Rosselli (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, allow me to commend you, Mr. President, for your concept note (S/2016/416, annex) and for your initiative to convene this open debate focused on countering the narratives and ideologies of terrorist groups. I also express my gratitude for the briefings by Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson, Mr. Mohi El-Din Afifi and Mr. Steven Crown.

Every act of terrorism is criminal and unjustifiable, regardless of the motivation behind it, where and when it takes place or who commits it. Terrorism is a difficult phenomenon to define given its multifaceted character and the myriad reasons behind it, which could be of a political, ideological, philosophical, religious, ethnic, racial or any other nature. My delegation believes that linking or conflating terrorism with any religion, nationality or civilization should be rejected. Religious extremism is not unique to Islam, and neither is — or ever has been —the violent extremism that leads to terrorism. Regrettably, the terrorist groups that are at the focus of our attention today — such as Da'esh, Al-Qaida, Boko Haram and associated groups — justify their actions on the basis of a distorted interpretation of the precepts of the Islamic religion.

Several strategies have been mentioned for breaking the cycle of radicalization that aim to destroy the message or the messenger. We understand that some are complementary of one another. While destroying the messenger leads us to a short-term solution, destroying the message will lead to the long-term solution that combating this scourge requires today. An effective strategy for combating violent extremism and terrorism should not be limited to punitive measures alone, but adopt a preventive approach that makes it possible to identify and put an early stop to nascent radicalization efforts.

Carrying on this fight requires taking into account the underlying causes that contribute to the emergence of extremist groups and terrorist groups and developing encompassing strategies to address the various problems. At the same time, we must appropriately use international cooperation while helping those in most need. As members of the international community, there are various avenues we can take to address many of the root causes that serve as breeding grounds for the emergence of violent extremists with terrorist inclinations.

It is urgent that we halt the spread of the extremist ideology that serves as a precursor of terrorist groups. Above and beyond the essential primary responsibility of each State in exercising its sovereign powers, we have a collective responsibility to act effectively and with robustness. We owe it to the victims of terrorist attacks and their families — victims from the international community whom we mourn irrespective of religion or nationality. We therefore commend the recent holding of the Geneva Conference on Preventing Violent Extremism and welcome the Secretary-General's Plan of Action on the subject.

In that context and against the backdrop of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, without duplication of effort, we think it is important to create a space to address the issue of narratives, which Egypt very aptly placed at the heart of today's debate. Although we agree on the need to step up global efforts against terrorism, the proliferation of initiatives by various actors do not seem conducive to promising outcomes. Instead, it could serve to confuse, fragment and weaken the global effort and take us away from the common goal. It is therefore key to coordinate the different ongoing initiatives, such as the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, the Secretary-General's Action Plan and the efforts being made in the Alliance of Civilizations. Religious leaders will play an essential role in correcting the false statements of those promoting violent extremism. All religions include a message about going beyond being an individual and doing what is right. We need to suppress calls encouraging people to achieve supremacy over others through violence.

In combating terrorism we walk a fine line between eliminating this scourge and protecting and bolstering our fundamental freedoms and our values of tolerance and solidarity. We must be very careful not to violate human rights. No effort in the context of combating terrorism must lead to limiting the freedom of expression, the freedom of religion and the freedom of the press or stigmatizing political opponents. Every well knows how terrorists effectively use information platforms and social networks to disseminate their hateful messages. But in one way or another, we should take more responsibility for the platforms and networks that terrorists' use for their own advancement, because if they are used properly, they are ideal for good communication.

Access to the political sphere must not be cut off. Pushing out and eliminating radicals only creates a breeding ground for extremist ideologies. It fuels resentment, which often mixes with other basic ingredients, namely, poverty, inequality, unemployment, a lack of opportunities and censorship, all of which fuel radical discourse. It is preferable to allow radicals to act in the political sphere, so as to be able to openly confront their discourses and ideas. That is the best way to reveal their weaknesses and inconsistencies. When we prohibit their involvement, we see a resurgence of extremist violence and terrorism. There have been recent examples of that.

We need to study and understand the ideologies of extremist violence and the rhetoric that extremists use. We must develop counternarratives that can dampen the allure of those ideologies. Terrorist groups, such as Da'esh, Al-Qaida and Boko Haram, use religion as a pretext to justify the unjustifiable through a narrative that twists the intrinsic value of faith. We cannot remain idle in the face of their messages of hate and destruction. Those ideologues of hatred, many of whom are intellectually well trained but come from places where progress has been lacking, end up only ostracizing people and impoverishing the societies that they dominate and claim to be defending.

We must establish a genuine global communication strategy that is efficient and able to counter the ideologies used by the violent extremist leaders. We have to develop messages that offer better life-options and that are not discriminatory with regard to the religion that they practice. The progress of the world and human beings is not determined only by religion. We must assign it the place and importance that it deserves as an intimate and personal belief, but it must not be turned into a barrier for social development.

We must encourage the teaching of tolerance in educational curricula and promote messages that foster tolerance and respect for differences, harmony and peaceful coexistence among nations, cultures and religions. For that reason, we welcome the participation of everybody in today's timely open debate.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I wish to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than four minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. Delegations with lengthy statements are kindly requested to circulate the texts in writing and to deliver a condensed version when speaking in the Chamber. I would also like to appeal to speakers to deliver their statements at a reasonable speed so that interpretation may be provided accurately.

I wish to inform all concerned that we will be carrying on this open debate right through the lunch hour, as we have a very large number of speakers.

I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Mr. Koenders (Netherlands): I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Arab Republic of Egypt for organizing this important debate.

Today's debate is, in my view, a very timely one, timely because of the upcoming review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and because of the several, very tragic events that have happened recently: terrorist bombs in Ankara and Istanbul and gunmen attacking a hotel in Ouagadougou. Last week I was on the beach in Côte d'Ivoire to pay tribute to those who were killed in Grand-Bassam. The dozens of ordinary men, women and children in a park in Lahore killed by a suicide bomber targeting Christians at Easter; the dozens of lives lost in terrorist strikes at Brussels' airport and metro, and today, the tragic attacks in Baghdad killing at least 85 people underline the urgency of this debate. My thoughts and sympathies go to the victims of terrorism all over the world and to their families. I would like also to pay my condolences to you, Mr. President, because of the lost policemen in Egypt this weekend. Such attacks try to create fear, panic and the destruction of our ways of life and our freedoms. They try to instil fear and division among us, and they will not succeed because their attacks underline the vital importance of international cooperation in the fight against terrorism, in preventing violent extremism and in offering alternative messaging.

Nobody in this Chamber can afford to go it alone, if we want to achieve long-term success. Foreign terrorist fighters, a new term, are in fact not foreign, as they come from among us, from the social fabric of our societies. Nobody can go it alone; we are all going through stress tests in our societies, and one of the main lessons we can draw from the recent attacks in the past month is the need to think globally and act very locally.

As such, the Kingdom of the Netherlands welcomes the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, and underlines the importance of building national action plans. Such comprehensive plans should not be perceived as an exercise in finger pointing. No — all of us face the same challenge of violent extremism, and we have to work together to meet it effectively. Sharing information is one key element of cooperation, and frankly we need more trust among ourselves and our nations and among our law-enforcement agencies, our border guards and our intelligence operations. We need to break the code of silence that sustains networks of foreign terrorist fighters and facilitates suspected terrorists, who operate under the radar. We need to work with the private sector and with civil society to break the silence and stop terrorist financing in a legal and effective framework.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands has committed to contributing robustly to the multilateral approach to cooperation, including through the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum, which we currently co-Chair together with the Kingdom of Morocco. In that Forum, we work to streamline our national policies on, for example, the rehabilitation of former terrorists, because that is a second obligation, namely, to achieve a better balance between dissuasive and preventative approaches. We have to work in our prisons, with returnees, with youth, with police and with religious leaders. That is the day-to-day work in our societies. The Jordan-led Aqaba Middle East peace process poses an example of an effective exchange of lessons learned, building bridges between countries and increasing our day-to-day collaboration.

Even though Governments can be instrumental in delivering a strong and positive narrative, messages are more effective when they are developed and disseminated by our new generations. To young people who question the legitimacy of authority in general, any message disseminated only by a Government could be received with suspicion. So what are our alternatives? We need to acknowledge that we as Governments often try to fight a modern battle with old weapons. We need young people, who can understand the motivations for joining brutal terrorist groups, who speak the right language and who know how to communicate via apps and online tools.

We need to promote the positive role played by young people who have fled from the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham and who are brave enough to speak up. As a Government, the Netherlands can empower them, with you and others to protect them against those who want to stifle their voices. For that we have to work with all the stakeholders — the teachers, the business community, the parents and even the sports clubs.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands believes freedom of speech is crucial for stimulating critical thinking, which is one of the strongest weapons against extremist propaganda. Last year, our association of journalists organized a road show on press freedom and taught young people how to question the opinions that they encounter. We should reach out to children at an early age to familiarize them with alternatives to violent narratives. In Jordan and Lebanon, we are working with local partners to build bridges between refugee communities and host communities, with education for children on values like tolerance, diversity and respect for others.

In conclusion, let me make two final observations. First, the Council has not heard me use the word "counternarrative". I don't actually care much for that word because, to me, it sounds defensive and reactive. There are no general counternarratives that can do justice to an individual's life in all its brilliance and confusion and with all its challenges and rewards. I prefer to use terms such as "positive" or "inclusive" narrative.

My second observation is that working with our young people should be our top priority for preventing violent extremism. They are our first line of defence, the people who can build bridges between countries and prevent their friends from becoming terrorists. But they need our help, at the national, local and international levels. In order to enable them to be the voice of reason, we must ensure that we put in place appropriate international frameworks and policies for upholding the standards of international human rights, the rule of law and the freedoms that distinguish us from barbaric terrorist groups. The only way to make our strategy work is to teach young people to be critical thinkers, make up their own minds and take control of their own lives without hurting others. They are the agents of change.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Argentine Republic.

Ms. Malcorra (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would first like to thank the Egyptian presidency for the invitation to participate in today's open debate on an issue of such importance to the international community. I would also like to thank the Deputy Secretary-General for his statement earlier and all the briefers for theirs.

Argentina condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and considers terrorist acts to be a threat not only to international peace and security but also to human dignity, peaceful and civilized coexistence, the stability and consolidation of democracy and the economic and social development of nations. My country, which was a victim of bloody terrorist attacks in the 1990s, affirms that terrorist acts are criminal and unjustifiable, regardless of why, when or by whomever they are committed. Terrorism cannot and should not be associated with any particular religion, nationality, civilization or ethnic group.

Argentina has always repudiated the grave violations and abuses perpetrated by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), with their resulting impact on regional stability and international peace and security. We reiterate our categorical condemnation of all terrorist acts carried out by that group in all their forms and manifestations and would like to express our deep solidarity with the civilian victims of the cruelty and evil acts committed by that terrorist group and the groups associated with it. We cannot and must not succumb to fear, however.

Although our region is a long way from the current conflict zone, we continue to be concerned about the threat of foreign terrorist fighters, which demands preventive action. We monitor the issue through the Southern Common Market's Permanent Working Group on Terrorism, through which Argentina supports the strengthening of cooperation with the countries of the region through the exchange of information by the relevant agencies and effective border controls. At the global level, we also support efforts aimed at facilitating the exchange of information that is helpful for the early detection of flows of foreign terrorist fighters.

However, we cannot deal with terrorism solely through defence and security measures. Our efforts must be based on a comprehensive approach, as reflected in the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, founded on a balanced implementation of the Strategy's four pillars and with full respect for international law and international human rights, humanitarian and refugee law. We must intensify our preventive action. In many cases, the reasons for such extreme violence lie in the underlying causes, which makes imperative an approach based on international, multidimensional and multidisciplinary cooperation, which, in turn, requires commitment and interdependence between security stakeholders and entities in the areas of development, social policy and education. As my Dutch colleague just said, it also requires trust.

It therefore becomes a priority to combat radicalization through the Internet by developing positive, constructive messages and counternarratives in collaboration with service providers and the private sector, while respecting the freedom of expression. We are pleased that presidential statement S/PRST/2016/6, adopted by the Council today, covers many of those elements, including the role that can be played by victims, among other legitimate voices, in countering the radicalization that leads to terrorist violence and narratives.

We must take advantage of the opportunity provided by the tenth anniversary of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy to reaffirm the consensus that enabled us to adopt the Strategy in 2006. Through its four pillars, the Strategy continues to be in full force today as a guide for United Nations efforts. Argentina has the great responsibility of having been designated by the President of the General Assembly as co-facilitator, together with Iceland, of the fifth biennial review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. We call on all States to join in that exercise, which we want to be open and transparent, in order to arrive at a solid result that renews our Organization's consensus on its action against terrorism.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden.

Ms. Wallström (Sweden): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's important debate. I also welcome the Council's adoption this morning of presidential statement S/PRST/2016/6 on the subject. I condemn all terrorist attacks, including the recent and horrible attacks in Iraq, in which so many have been killed. I would like to offer my condolences to all those affected.

Terrorism poses a major threat to peaceful, democratic and open societies, as previous speakers today have said so eloquently. It tears apart the fabric of society. Here I would like to recall a story about one young man who was tempted to go and fight for Da'esh but was told by his imam that rather than dying as a martyr he would drown in his mother's tears.

While I align myself with the statement to be delivered later on behalf of the European Union, I would like to underscore the following. First, our response must be collective. The threat of terrorism is transnational, as we all know, and our response must therefore also be multilateral. The United Nations has unique and important assets enabling it to contribute to providing counters to the narratives and ideologies of terrorism. Going beyond measures aimed at enhancing security, it should focus on implementing the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (A/70/674), which Sweden strongly supports.

Regional cooperation and regional organizations play a key role. The United Nations can use its convening power to bring together relevant regional and intergovernmental organizations and mechanisms. It can also support and facilitate their work in other ways. The African Union, the League of Arab States, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the European Union, the Alliance of Civilizations and the Union for the Mediterranean all bring clear added-value to global efforts through established programmes, networks, counselling and cooperation. In the context of today's debate, I would like to highlight the priority that such organizations give to issues related to the media, young people, education and migration, and the United Nations should continue to provide support to those efforts.

My second point is that we need more and different actors. Governments and multilateral organizations will not suffice. We need to team up with civil society, the media, religious and community leaders, social workers, faith-based organizations and business. Through them, we can safeguard a culture of peaceful exchange and dialogue — a multitude of actors creating resilience through inclusive dialogue aimed at promoting diversity and tolerance. That will contribute to the loss of the appeal of the destructive discourses.

However, we must recognize that more research is needed into the psychology of violent extremism. The narratives — as abhorrent, violent and inhumane as they are — are attractive to some. Our understanding of radicalization processes is still too limited. The key to success will involve reaching out to young people, as we heard the representative of the Netherlands say. Sweden therefore fully supports resolution 2250 (2015) and the work of the Secretary-General's Special Envoy on Youth, Mr. Ahmad Alhendawi. At home, Sweden has appointed a national coordinator to strengthen the resilience of democracy against violent extremism. We see clear and early benefits of that office, including at the municipal level where many possible preventive interventions can be made.

My third point is that we must target the root causes. Destructive narratives sometimes fester because of an abetting context. Terrorism and violent extremism feed on grievances, which they do not solve, but nurture. That is the logic of the instrumentalization that terrorist and extremist organizations employ. Economic and social disenfranchisement, lack of dignity, corruption, democratic deficiencies and human rights violations are sometimes part of the radicalization context. In that regard, we must tackle those challenges resolutely, not least by implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (General Assembly resolution 70/1).

But other threats that underpin the ideologies of terrorism and violent extremism must also be addressed forcefully. That includes racism, hatred, and acts of violence based on Islamophobia, anti-Semitism and Afrophobia. We must refrain from all forms of scapegoating and fear-mongering. Targeting a certain religion, region, nationality or ethnic group plays right into the hands of the terrorist ideology that we seek to counter. Interfaith dialogue and education play a critical role in reducing such tendencies.

Terrorists seek to divide us and spread fear. Our response — our counter-narrative and our actions — must be one of inclusiveness, unity and trust. Real dialogue, based on the equality and dignity of all persons, is certainly the best antidote to racism, xenophobia and Islamophobia. Therefore, the United Nations — as the guardian of global dialogue among nations and peoples — can and must be at the heart of our global efforts to prevent violent extremism and counter terrorism.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Investment Promotion of Somalia.

Mr. Omer (Somalia): The Government of the Federal Republic of Somalia welcomes this timely debate organized and chaired by Egypt on the topic countering the narratives and ideologies of extremism. Violent extremism is an issue that is truly dangerous and needs to be countered effectively and immediately. It is a threat that causes suspicion, hatred and division across the world. It is also fuelling many of our wars and humanitarian crises across the globe, crises that are perpetuated by the lack of a political solutions and the rise of radicalized foreign fighters.

The Government of Somalia welcomes the Secretary-General's call to action and unity on countering violent extremism. Our Government is working across all groups in our society to counter extremism in Somalia, and we are partnering with the United Nations and other key stakeholders, including the League of Arab States, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the Global Coalition to Counter the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and individual partner nations to overcome that evil.

Countering violent extremism is indeed a key challenge in our time. Where once people had to cross borders to radicalize and divide societies with mindless violence, today they just need to click a button on their computer. That brings the threat of radicalization closer to each home, street and nation around the world. That is why we must work together as a community of nations to formulate and execute a coherent and responsive plan that safeguards our citizens and deals an ideological blow to the extremism that has caused so much misery and instability.

Confronting violent extremism requires a combination of good governance, respect for the rule of law and the promotion of the ideals of peace so that we can show a better alternative to those at risk of radicalization. Given the immanent and fluid nature of the threat, everybody's job is to work together to put effective responses into practice. Governments, civil society, religious leaders and the business community must join hands at the local, national and international levels to end radicalization so that one of the major forces fuelling violent extremism can be extinguished.

Despite the misinterpretation of Islam by the violent extremists, a central belief in Islamic teaching must be used to defeat their fraudulent ideas. That is tolerance, interfaith dialogue and education. We should bear in mind, however, that Islamophobia is as extreme and dehumanizing as other forms of extremism and must be challenged and defeated collectively.

Currently in Somalia, we are countering violent extremism with genuine religious education, amnesty for those seeking to return from radicalization and educating our people about the evils of radicalization and violent extremism. We are also collaborating with our partners and stakeholders to exchange knowledge and formulate best practices. Furthermore, our draft national security plan specifies countering violent extremism as a priority. That is further evidence of our Government's commitment to addressing that crucial issue purposefully.

As more and more Al-Shabaab fighters return from the violent wilderness into Government hands and their communities, we are confident that the Somali strategy on countering violent extremism will steadily continue to become more successful, especially as we make further political, security and economic development gains nationally.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iceland.

Ms. Alfreðsdóttir (Iceland): Allow me to thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this timely debate on a matter of vital importance. I would also like to pay tribute to the co-organization by Switzerland and the United Nations of the Geneva Conference on Preventing Violent Extremism in April. We also look forward to the conclusion of the review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and the discussions on the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (A/70/674).

While it is clear that Africa and the Middle East bare the brunt of terrorism, destabilization and the corrosive effects on the lives of millions of individuals and whole communities, there is virtually no country left untouched. Underlying the violence are complex webs of tacit and active support, sympathy and encouragement, which are often hard to identify and even harder to root out.

All our societies potentially harbour individuals who instigate and nurture ideologies that can be turned into a justification for violence and terrorism. What is new in recent years are the powerful tools of modern life that give such individuals tremendous leverage. To give some examples, we know that YouTube has taken down 14 million videos in the past two years. Facebook receives and reviews 1 million user notifications per week about violations of its rules, and Twitter has closed down 2,000 accounts related to the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in recent months.

The Secretary-General's report on the threat posed by ISIL (S/2016/92) paints a frightening picture of the sophistication of ISIL and other similar movements in manipulating young people through its use of visual and social media. The same report makes the point that the journey of each individual fighter into terrorist activity involves a unique combination of factors. There is no simple approach to identifying potential terrorists, and even less a silver bullet to stop them from being radicalized and recruited in the first place.

The impact of terrorism fuelled by violent extremists is clear to us all. The massive scope and complexity of the task of addressing it are also clear in scale, if not in detail. We must act together urgently as a world community. We must improve coordination within the United Nations on how to address terrorism and violent extremism. We need to work for an internationally comprehensive approach. I fully agree with the Foreign Minister of Egypt on the imperative of confronting narratives and ideologies, and we must do that together. We need to be honest about identifying the internal and external drivers of violent extremism and terrorism. It is my firm belief that if we do not do this, then we will be fighting with one hand tied behind the back.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Vincenzo Amendola, Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Italy.

Mr. Amendola (Italy): I thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this timely debate on an issue that demands a comprehensive global response and cannot be associated with any religion, nationality, civilization or ethnic group. The evaluation of the threat confirms the need to face this challenge through a global response of a wide-ranging nature. It is a challenge without borders, and it is a challenge that requires a multidimensional answer.

Italy advocates that our response must be holistic in terms of answering through holistic political, cultural and diplomatic actions. Italy's approach focuses on training local security forces and countering financial flows to extremist groups. It takes into consideration all aspects of those borderless challenges. Together, we will defeat the military terrorist organizations, but together we must eradicate the roots of those extremist activities, and we must do it all together.

First and foremost comes prevention. I would like to reiterate the Italian support for the Security Council's discussion and debate and for the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (A/70/674), because the Plan of Action involves a comprehensive approach that encompasses not just security-based counter-terrorism measures, but also systematic preventive ones.

We have a twofold responsibility, because for any long-term solution we must base our actions on understanding the forces that alienate individuals, young people in particular, and lead them to join extremist groups. That means tackling the root causes of the phenomenon. We need to address the conditions, such as the lack of socioeconomic opportunities, marginalization and discrimination, poor governance and violations of human rights and the rule of law, as well as radicalization in prisons and in marginalized communities.

Our twofold responsibility entails acting together not simply to combat those organizations but also to respect the freedom and values that every society should defend and especially disseminated to the young generation. We need to prevent sectarian political conflict, which we believe opens the door for totalitarian political organizations, such as Da'esh. At the same time, we need to fight Islamophobia, which serves as a major asset to terrorist organizations, since a minority within certain groups want to become the majority.

Secondly, we must fully implement the relevant United Nations resolutions adopted to cut off the financial sources of terrorism. But we must also show the value of community when we have crises, like that of refugees flowing from the theatres of war. We must show solidarity, as we are doing in Italy by developing human corridors to save the lives of refugees escaping from war, especially those from Lebanon.

Thirdly, we are speaking about counter-narratives, which means building bridges of understanding, starting from our resolutions on youth, in particular. That is because we must engage the youth community, especially when it is marginalized, around the discussion of shared values and mutual respect. At the same time, we must of course fight together to introduce innovative counter-terrorism legislation. Our twofold responsibility and twofold actions requires us to create and build bridges of understanding in our societies.

After the recent attack in Paris, our Government proposed and approved a new concept in our budgetary legislation. For each euro that we spend on counter-terrorism — last year we spent €1 billion — we must spend the same amount on culture. That entails building within society a space for involvement, inclusion and strengthening. That is a message from a society that respects freedom and the inclusion of the young generation in particular. It is a commitment and action based on what we are doing now, not just on the local or national level, but also involves opening ourselves up to a multilateral dimension that prevents conflict, helps refugees to escape war and attempts to solve conflicts through political means. These minority groups, especially Da'esh in the Middle East and North African region, want to create borders between the values of the majority that we respect and a new community that wants to become a State.

My final point concerns culture and education. In our multidimensional approach, by focusing on culture and invest in education we are investing in building a bridge of understanding. This is not just a narrative; it involves promoting and reorganizing our society based on the concept of inclusion and shared values. Terrorists seek to divide us by race, ethnicity, nationality and values. This is the opposite of the identity and diversity of the Mediterranean region, which is a melting pot of various religions and cultures that together create an intense and beautiful heritage.

I wish to express my condolences for what happened yesterday in Baghdad. When I last visited Iraq, I visited an Italian-Iraqi institute that defends the beautiful archaeological heritage of the country. In that visit, we studied what is taking place in Mosul. Via satellite imaging, we saw the first destruction of antiquities by Da'esh. What they are doing in Iraq, what they have done in other places, is an attack on the very idea of the Mediterranean region. The Mediterranean region is an idea of identity and diversity that together created the most intense experience of civilization in the past century.

Only by protecting our cultural heritage, refugees and the idea of a society where security, respect for freedom and the promotion of integration work together can we create not just a counter-narrative but an idea of society consistent with the efforts of the United Nations and expressive of the values underlying relevant United Nations resolutions that can fight terrorist and extremist organizations and eradicate the roots of terrorism and extremism, while actively promoting practical proposals for our communities.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the Foreign Secretary of the Republic of Maldives.

Mr. Naseer (Maldives): I would like to start by congratulating the Egyptian delegation on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council, and thank it for convening today's debate to coincide with the high-level thematic debate on the United Nations, peace and security, organized by the President of the General Assembly. This is indeed an opportune time to discuss this important issue of countering the narratives and ideologies of terrorism, which is at the heart of the war against terrorism.

It has become increasingly evident that the psychological weaponry used by various terrorist groups to propagate their narratives and ideologies to recruit supporters and fighters are equally if not more dangerous than the bombs and guns they use in attacking civilians. Ideology can have more lasting and deep-rooted impacts, which are far more complex to address and resolve. Yet a greater proportion of resources allocated for combatting terrorism have been spent on combat operations. While combat operations are important and necessary, we now recognize that defeating terrorist ideologies is the lynchpin of eliminating the global threat of terrorism.

To do that, countries need to get a full grasp of the ideology of terrorism. We need to understand why a reasonable individual holding a decent job can be so easily convinced to become a human weapon in the hands of the terrorists. We need to ask hard questions about whether the injustices and inequalities and such racial or religious prejudices as the Islamophobia at national and international levels are giving the terrorists an easy excuse to assault the principles, norms and values that we have cherished for centuries. We have to gain a deeper understanding of the ideas that are fuelling and driving terrorism. Only a correct analysis of the situation will lead to developing the right strategies and tools to eliminate the menace of terrorism.

The United Nations is ideally placed to lead the global efforts aimed at combatting the ideas that drive terrorism. As the primary body mandated by the Charter to maintain peace and security, the Security Council's role is key within the Organization. Although various resolutions have been adopted by Council over the years, there is still much to be done to address the root causes.

Resolutions 1624 (2005) and 2178 (2014) are important steps in the right direction. At the same time, we must also quickly finalize the draft comprehensive convention on international terrorism, which is currently being discussed in the Sixth Committee. And we should work collectively to overcome the stalemates in the negotiations, finalize and implement this draft treaty, which has been in the works for almost 10 years. Most importantly, the United Nations system can help countries to work collaboratively. It can help Member States cultivate the values of respect and the importance of promoting peace at every level in society.

The Maldives enacted its counter-terrorism legislation in October last year in an effort to stop Maldivians engaging in terrorist activities. The law restricts the publication and distribution, even through media channels or the Internet, of any materials that could incite terrorist acts or propagate terrorist ideologies. Pursuant to this law, President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom formulated a comprehensive national policy to counter terrorism and militant radicalism in the country. And in February this year, President Yameen established the National Counter-Terrorism Centre. The Centre is mandated to formulate counter-terrorism guidelines and procedures based on the analysis of international benchmarks and best practices. It is prepared to gather and analyse intelligence on terrorism activities from all agencies and implement recommendations. It is also seeking to identify radicalized elements within the communities and run targeted rehabilitation programmes for those in need.

Our vision is clear and our commitment is strong in stopping, defeating and eliminating the menace of terrorism. To achieve this end, the Maldives and the rest of the world needs the leadership of the United Nations to counter the ideologies that shape and drive terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

The President: I now give the floor to the State Secretary for Political Affairs of Denmark.

Ms. Wisborg (Denmark): At the outset, Denmark would like to thank the Egyptian presidency of the Security Council for the taking the initiative to convene today's open debate. The topic is highly relevant and at the top of our shared agenda. Today's meeting is also very timely in the light of the upcoming review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in June.

I align my statement with the statement to be delivered shortly by the observer of the European Union.

Terrorism and violent extremism seek to threaten not just our collective security and stability but our very way of life. The unacceptable acts of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and other groups, resulting in unimaginable suffering, devastation and senseless loss of life, run counter to basic norms of human decency and rights and the very values and principles on which the United Nations was built. They require a strong and determined collective response. Denmark remains a resolute and active partner in global efforts to fight terrorism, in particular the acute and real threat posed by terrorist groups such as Al-Qaida, Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab and, not least, ISIL.

The global framework for countering violent extremism and terrorism should be firmly anchored at the United Nations. We must continue to implement the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy through a comprehensive approach, and one that embraces core recommendations in the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (A/70/674) and its all-of-United Nations approach. We must remain focused on turning this common framework into concrete actions and results on the ground.

Denmark introduced a national countering violent extremism action plan in 2014, from which we have benefitted greatly. It is a tool for developing multi-agency approaches and partnerships with local communities. Our experience has shown us that while we are managing the imminent threats of terrorism, we must at the same time be able to focus on prevention. We know that violent extremism is more likely to take root when we fail — for example, through local communities — to offer attractive alternatives to the distorted narratives offered by violent extremists.

Countering extremism by fostering a sense of purpose and identity for our youth — through investing in preventive measures, education and jobs — is key. In our societies, we must continue to focus on ensuring that fundamental notions of citizen participation, human rights and democracy are passed on and reinforced. The strongest counter-narrative against terrorism and violent extremism is open and inclusive societies. The Nordic countries have initiated a Nordic Safe Cities Network, in line with the global Strong Cities Network, exchanging experiences and innovative methods to strengthen our work, in particular on prevention and rehabilitation, and on the close collaboration among social services, schools, police, religious communities and civil society at the local level.

I wish to also mention that Denmark has recently initiated a new regional programme to counter violent extremism, with a focus on assisting Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq. It includes a focus on counter-messaging, countering illicit financing, as well as exit support and forms part of the comprehensive Danish engagement to help counter violent extremism and promote peace and security in the Middle East region. I should also mention that in order to reduce ISIL's appeal to potential foreign terrorist fighters, we are supporting initiatives to investigate and document war crimes and human rights abuses in Iraq and Syria committed by ISIL and other extremists.

Let me conclude by affirming Denmark's continuing commitment to our shared effort and to supporting the United Nations in countering the threat of extremism and terrorism. Denmark welcomes the Security Council's continuing active role in addressing that common challenge.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to Mr. Alain Le Roy, Secretary General of the European External Action Service.

Mr. Le Roy (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this debate at a very important moment, as today marks the eve of the anniversary of the review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and the introduction of the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (A/70/674).

The recent terrorist attacks around the world, including in Brussels, remind us of the urgency to join forces in the fight against terrorism and radicalization leading to terrorism and violent extremism. Terrorism cannot be vanquished solely through security measures. The response to radicalization and terrorist recruitment must be comprehensive. We recall here that violent extremism must not and cannot be associated with any given religion, nationality, civilization or specific ethnicity.

Today's topic, "Countering the narratives and ideologies of terrorism", is of particular importance to us in our battle against Da'esh and other terrorist groups and our efforts to strengthen the resilience of societies to violent extremism. In that context, it is important to collaborate more closely with civil society, including women, young people and religious leaders. In that regard, I welcome the presence here today of the Secretary-General of the Al Azhar Islamic Research Academy, whose briefing this morning was particularly relevant. Women, young people, religious leaders and civil society organizations are often better placed than institutional actors to develop messages capable of discrediting Da'esh propaganda.

Within the European Union (EU), we have developed a clear vision of the battle that must be led against terrorism and radicalization. It is reflected in the new European security programme for 2015-2020 and the conclusions on counter-terrorism adopted by the Council of the European Union in February 2015. Allow me to present a brief outline of the EU's counter-terrorism functions, particularly the use of strategic communications to combat terrorist propaganda, the monitoring and suppression of terrorist content, and, more globally, cooperation with the private sector in developing counter-terrorism narratives.

In December 2015, European Commissioner Avramopoulos launched the European Union Internet Forum. On that occasion, Ministers of EU member States, Internet service providers and civil society gathered to discuss two goals: first, how to rapidly delete terrorist content; and secondly, how to spread alternative messages capable of countering terrorist propaganda.

With respect to the first objective, the European Police Office Internet Referral Unit assists in identifying terrorist content and reporting it to Internet service providers so they may delete it. Initial results are encouraging. However, as the representative of the online industry mentioned this morning, new websites appear almost instantaneously. As to the second goal, the European Radicalisation Awareness Network brings together representatives of civil society organizations and industry to work on counter-narratives aimed at strengthening critical thinking, civic values and a sense of involvement.

(*spoke in English*)

Beyond our own backyard, we are also active in developing strategic communications for people outside the EU. A task force is working in the Arab world to identify shared values and develop concrete communication actions. The EU supports the Strategic Communication Advisory Team project giving technical expertise to EU member State authorities to more effectively tackle terrorist propaganda, with a particular focus on Da'esh propaganda. The EU is also actively participating in the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL Strategic Communications Working Group and is very closely following the early work of the anti-ISIL strategic communications cell set up by the United Kingdom.

Communication is not the only answer, however. We also need to address root causes, which means also eradicating the inequalities that lead to exclusion, marginalization and radicalization. Our commitment to providing material support to developing countries is well known. In that context, poverty reduction, ensuring sustainable economic, social and environmental development, democracy, the rule of law, good governance and human rights are obviously critical pieces of the anti-radicalization puzzle.

Moreover, we also need to prevent violent extremism, our other key priority. Our approach is based on local knowledge. Criminal justice, information exchange, education and youth participation, intercultural dialogue, employment and initiatives for social inclusion can all play a crucial role. In that context, the EU has set up the Radicalization Awareness Network Centre of Excellence, which now involves over 2,000 European practitioners, such as teachers, health-care workers, social and youth workers, prison officers and non-governmental organizations to exchange best practices on prevention. That is key. The approach is founded on understanding and addressing the root causes of radicalization while strengthening resilience, and its goal is to propose practical tools and recommendations to practitioners and decision-makers alike.

We need to counter the narratives and ideologies of terrorist groups if we are to be successful in the global fight against terrorism. Terrorism and violent extremism are global challenges, and the United Nations has a central role in supporting Member States in that endeavour. In that regard, we welcome the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism. We remain engaged in considering it, including in terms of strategic communications and building alternative narratives on the occasion of the upcoming review of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and in other relevant forums.

We also welcome presidential statement S/PRST/2016/6, which was just adopted by the Security Council, as a good basis for further work in this area. Together, we can pool enormous resources and expertise to face this immense challenge. We will be successful against the terrorist narrative and ideology only by responding with clear and concrete preventive measures. A joint approach, based on our shared values, is sine qua non.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to Mr. Nakseu-Nguefang, Director of Political Affairs, International Organization of la Francophonie.

Mr. Nakseu-Nguefang (*spoke in French*): I wish at the outset to thank you, Sir, for the invitation to participate in this meeting and to commend your initiative to organize this important debate on a topical issue. We also take this opportunity to offer you our condolences following the tragic events in Egypt a few days ago.

Terrorism and violent radicalization are among the most salient threats facing la Francophonie. For a number of years, the French-speaking regions of the North and the South have been rudely shaken by acts of terrorism, owing not only to the numerous recent attacks on our States members, but also because terrorist networks are targeting a significant segment of French-speaking youth in their recruitment strategies.

That situation is not limited to la Francophonie. Today it is a global concern. The situation is also of particular concern to our organization, whose founding principles — the promotion of democracy, cultural diversity, tolerance and solidarity — have been put to the test. Therefore, on behalf of the Secretary General of la Francophonie, Her Excellency Mme. Michaëlle Jean, we welcome the holding of this open debate and would like to express our thanks for the opportunity offered to us to share the vision of our organization.

We welcome presidential statement S/PRST/2016/6, just adopted, which demonstrates the strong determination of the international community to counter hate speech. Similarly, we welcome the Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (A/70/674) launched at the beginning of the year. La Francophonie intends to contribute fully to the implementation of that Plan.

The situation is urgent. The conditions that lead some of our youth to adhere to destructive speech are manifold. Besides the unresolved conflicts that fuel hatred, one of the causes of the increase in violent radicalization that we must address is the crisis in the relationship between the State and society. The deficit in governance and political representation increasingly is leading to a breakdown of trust in the State and its representatives, at all levels. It can be shown that there is very little room left for expressing the needs of young people. The young people feel that they are not properly directed nor involved in sociopolitical life, and they accuse the State of not being able to tackle inequality or to provide professional and economic opportunities.

It is important that public actors, supported by international partners, be more and better able to integrate young people, as well as women, into politics: to create conditions conducive to involving them in the exercise of power, to rejuvenate the political class and bring in more women, and also to promote civic and political engagement as a means of involvement and create spaces for debate and dialogue in the public sphere, universities and in social networks.

In that connection, on 10 March the Secretary General of La Francophonie launched a campaign entitled "Free together". It provides a public forum for the voices of the francophone young people in suggesting that they make their voices heard and affirm their commitment to the values of La Francophonie, which are freedom, equality, solidarity, brotherhood, diversity and peace. This campaign is having resounding success in the social media. In less than a week more than 2 million young people have shown an interest, reflecting their thirst for universal values. The campaign also aims to encourage young people to develop educational, cultural and artistic projects that illustrate their commitment to the values of freedom, tolerance and solidarity.

Also in that connection, La Francophonie is considering the role and responsibility of the media in dealing with the subject of terrorism. In any case, the freedom of the press must be guaranteed and innovation in the media must be promoted so that journalists can provide keys for understanding so that people can understand this phenomenon and deconstruct the narrative of terrorist groups. Similarly, we should raise awareness among groups owning the social media about their responsibilities with regard to the spread of such content. In this sense, La Francophonie is currently studying the stakes involved in regulation in the digital age. Finally, we believe it is important to emphasize media education. The development of tools to understand the risks associated with the use of new technologies and tools that can develop critical responses to that content should be encouraged.

La Francophonie will hold an international conference entitled "The fight against terrorism and the prevention of violent radicalization: towards an integrated francophone approach" on 6, 7 and 8 June in Paris. The objective of this conference is to develop a comprehensive strategy to fight terrorism and prevent violent radicalization in our society. It will pay particular attention to the political and economic integration of young people, education, the rule of law, coping strategies and the role and responsibility of the media in fighting terrorism.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate the importance of multilateral action and say that we stand ready to work with the United Nations in this matter, which is urgent for all of us. What is at stake are the values to which we all hold and the future of our young people.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the observer of the Holy See to the United Nations to participate in this meeting.

I now give the floor to the observer of the Holy See.

Brother Carroll (Holy See): The Holy See thanks the presidency of Egypt for bringing the topic of countering the narratives and ideologies of terrorism to the attention of the Security Council and the international community.

The theme of this open debate is extremely important, because it calls us to strike terrorism at its very roots and where it must primarily be fought, namely, in the hearts and minds of men and women, in particular of those who are most at risk of radicalization and recruitment by terrorist groups.

The narratives and ideologies of present-day terrorist groups are well known. They do not attempt to conceal their purportedly religiously inspired beliefs, values and principles. Terrorist groups identify multiple enemies, so that those who respond to their propaganda can legitimately attack those enemies wherever they may be, whether in Paris or in Brussels, in Istanbul, in Aleppo, in Baghdad, or elsewhere.

Countering the narratives and ideologies of terrorist groups is a grave responsibility of all of us. It should be recalled, however, that by building their ideological narratives that justify their horrendous acts of violence with tendentious interpretations and an abusive use of scripture texts, terrorists groups are throwing down the gauntlet principally to religious leaders, in particular for them to refute the falsehoods and condemn the blasphemies and narratives of those ideologies. Religious leaders and people of faith must be at the forefront in delegitimizing the manipulation of faith and the distortion of sacred texts as a justification for violence. Anyone who considers himself or herself a believer while planning and carrying out actions against the fundamental rights and dignity of every man and woman must be condemned.

The fight to unmask the lies behind the narratives and ideologies of present-day terrorist groups summons all religions to unite in confronting not only the unacceptable misuse of religion by these groups, but also all forms of religious bigotry, stereotyping and disrespect for what people hold sacred. Religious leaders must be the first to demonstrate what the fourth meeting of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and the Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies of Amman, held in the Vatican on 7 May, called the humanizing and civilizing role of our religions.

That brings us to the fundamental importance of education in countering narratives and ideologies of terrorism. Much of terror groups' success in recruiting is based on misinformation and the distortion both of history and the meaning of sacred texts. Objective education can counter such false narratives. We commend the Marrakesh Declaration on the Rights of Religious Minorities in Predominantly Muslim Majority Communities for urging Muslim educational institutions and authorities to conduct a courageous review of educational curricula that addresses honestly and effectively any material that instigates aggression and extremism, leads to war and chaos and results in the destruction of our shared societies.

My delegation believes that the more religion is manipulated to justify acts of terror and violence, the more religious leaders must be engaged in the overall effort to defeat the terrorism that hijacks it. Spurious religious fervour must be countered by authentic religious instruction and the example of authentic communities of faith. There is a strong nexus between religion and diplomacy and between faith-based informal diplomacy and the formal diplomacy of States. Strengthening that nexus would be wise diplomacy, given its enormous potential for confronting terrorism at its roots.

Measures to counter the narratives and ideologies of terrorism must address the root causes on which it feeds, and which make even the most outrageous claims of terrorist groups sound credible. Young people who join the ranks of terrorist organizations often come from poor immigrant families disillusioned by the lack of integration and values in some societies. Those who feel excluded from such societies or live on their fringes are immediately attracted to terrorists proclaiming themselves to be freedom fighters. Governments should engage with civil society to address the problems of communities that are most at risk of radicalization and recruitment and to achieve such communities' satisfactory social integration.

Certain terrorist groups have excelled in the art of cyber recruitment, giving them transnational and borderless reach. Their access to cyberspace must be denied in order to prevent their narratives and ideologies from poisoning the hearts and minds of millions everywhere, cut off their financing activities and disrupt their coordination of terrorist attacks.

The Holy See is convinced that if we are to win the minds and hearts of our children and young people and prevent them from joining terrorist groups, we must build inclusive societies and prevent illicit trafficking in arms. We must build bridges rather than walls, and engage in dialogue rather than in mutual isolation.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Iraq.

Mr. Alhakim (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): Iraq would like to welcome His Excellency Mr. Sameh Hassan Shokry Selim, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Arab Republic of Egypt. I would also like to express our condolences to the Government and the people of Egypt in the wake of the killing of Egyptian policemen by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

I thank the Arab Republic of Egypt for convening a meeting on this important subject relating to combating terrorism. We often focus on the operational and military aspects of terrorism at the expense of the intellectual dimension. We also welcome and commend the clarity and frankness of Egypt's concept paper (S/2016/416, annex), which clearly outlines the elements in the current dialogue.

Today an area of Baghdad was hit hard by a number of car bombs, which killed more than 100 people — women, children, merchants and others. Such suicide attacks are among the tools used by terrorists to spread their erroneous ideologies. Their watchwords are killing and destruction and we thank the States that have expressed their condolences today and shared our pain at the loss of so many innocent civilians.

Violent extremist ideologies are a direct threat to international peace and security. They are damaging to peace, social cohesion and the stability of States. We are therefore obliged to adopt a well-defined approach to dealing with such challenges, based on a clear strategy and declared positions. I would like to point out that the adoption of curricula that call for making takfiri accusations of others, and spreading erroneous takfiri religious fatwas and concepts through social media, will foster such distortions both in thinking and ideology, which can lead those influenced by them to resort to terrorism in its various forms and manifestations as a way to impose such thoughts — thoughts that are a serious threat to international peace and security and human civilization.

This is what we must do in order to participate in the international community's efforts to establish a global strategy aimed at combating ideological, takfiri terrorist thinking and messaging. First, we must identify the sources and religious and ideological foundations of terrorism. Secondly, we should ensure that ideologies that hark back to old extremist views expounded in books that some publishing houses have printed and reprinted again and again must be confronted. Thirdly, the international community must differentiate between respect for freedom of thought, as it is agreed on internationally, and for takfiri ideological thought, which calls for killing and repressing anyone who does not believe in an extremist ideology. Repressing such ideologies and preventing them from spreading is not a violation of people's right to freedom of opinion.

Furthermore, the only way to counter terrorism is to confront the madrasas and takfiri centres that exhort the killing of others. People are only lured by aims that can be attained, and if those objectives are extremist, terrorism will certainly follow. We believe that the world strategy against terrorist ideology must be based on the following measures.

First, we need an international list of books and publications disseminating takfiri thought and terrorist ideology that are liable to confiscation by States members of the United Nations and whose sale should be prohibited by national legislation criminalizing the publication of such books. Secondly, States suffering from international terrorism should receive assistance to establish mechanisms and initiatives allowing all stakeholders to combat takfiri sources of terrorism in their national communities. Thirdly, best practices and lessons learned need to be applied in combating the takfiri message of violence, in cooperation with other States. Fourthly, experts or writers in the field of religion — people who truly understand the religious ideas used by extremists to spread their ideology — must implement such a plan.

Terrorist organizations such as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, the Al-Nusra Front, Boko Haram and Al-Qaida are perpetrating the most heinous forms of destruction and killing in the name of Islam. Islam washes its hands of those people. It is the duty of Governments and religious people everywhere to counter takfiri extremist thinking and distorted fatwas. Persons of moderate faith must fight against the message whose aim is to eliminate others.

In conclusion, we thank Egypt as Chair of the Counter-Terrorism Committee. We also thank the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate for its field visit to Iraq and for the first meeting held to brief States on Iraq's needs in combating terrorism and extremist thinking.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I give the floor to the representative of Israel.

Mr. Danon (Israel): Today is not an ordinary day in the State of Israel. Once a year in Israel, all traffic stops and all daily activity comes to a halt as the people of Israel pause for a nationwide moment of silence, a similar to the one we observed here in the Chamber a few hours ago. Schoolchildren stand at attention, drivers get out of their cars, and people walking down the street bow their heads to remember those who have fallen in defence of the nation and those who were murdered because they wanted to live as a free people in our homeland.

Today, the State of Israel commemorates Yom Hazikaron, the memorial day for fallen soldiers and victims of terrorism.Today, as we meet to discuss terrorism in this Chamber, Israel honours the 23,447 individuals who have lost their lives to war and terror. Sadly, this year alone, 127 names have been added to this list of the fallen. May their memory be blessed.

For the Israeli people, the threat of terrorism is as old as Israel itself. Since the State was founded 68 years ago, not a day has gone by without the threat of terror. There is no one in Israel who does not know the pain of a family member or a friend whose life was destroyed by the cruel hand of terror. My own father was severely wounded during a terror attack while protecting the Jordan Valley as a reserve soldier and passed away after a long struggle. So I know the pain of terrorism first-hand.

In the past two decades alone, Israelis have faced tens of thousands of terror attacks in the form of missiles and rockets, stabbings and suicide bombings. During that period, 1,600 Israelis have been killed in acts of terror out of a population of only 6 million. Our enemies continue to use any means to murder innocent Israelis. Just three weeks ago as we met here in the Council Chamber discussing the Middle East, a Hamas terrorist blew himself up on a crowded bus in downtown Jerusalem.

Certain Member States, including some on the Council, are trying to keep those victims of terror out of today's discussion. When it comes to Israeli victims, there is always some excuse for terror. So let me set the record straight. Terrorism against Israel is not about our actions. It is about our very existence. It is about the values we represent. Terror attacks against my people started before 1967, before Israel became a State in 1948. Before this institution was even established, we had to face terrorism. I remind those who think that it is a conflict about territory that Israel withdrew completely from Gaza and southern Lebanon more than 10 years ago, yet to this day Hamas continues to build a terror base in Gaza, and Hizbullah has transformed the villages of southern Lebanon into armed outposts of terror.

The terror tactics have not changed because the ideology of terror has not changed. It is this evil ideology that drives terrorism in Israel, my country, in the region and around the world. Militant Islamic groups like the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham, Hizbullah, Hamas, Boko Haram and others distort justice in the name of religion to justify the murder of innocent people. They teach a philosophy of violence and hatred and they preach an ideology that glorifies death. The only way to defeat those terrorists is to counter them with moral clarity and political unity.

Unfortunately, that unity is broken when it comes to my country, Israel. Some Member States not only fail to condemn acts of terror against Israelis, but they justify the murder of innocent men, women and children in the name of a violent, radical ideology. Let me be clear. This is not human nature and they are not freedom fighters — they are terrorists. Shooting youngsters in a concert hall, targeting a busy airport and blowing up a bus full of people are not acts of freedom — they are acts of terror.

Those violent radical groups use modern means to achieve their barbaric goals. Terror groups now have advanced modern weapons and recruit on social media. We might ask ourselves how small bands of fanatics in remote places became sophisticated terror networks. Like any group seeking to expand its operations, they look for investors and backers. And they found them. Global terror is promoted, financed and supplied by State sponsors, and the biggest shareholder in the terrorist enterprise is Iran. Iran funds death and destruction across the region and beyond. It bankrolls fear, instability and chaos around the globe, It is long past time for the Council to eliminate Tehran's trust fund for terror and end the supply line fuelling violence in the Middle East and around the world.

Israel, like France and Belgium and too many others, is not being attacked because of what we do, but because of what we represent. Israel is an outpost of freedom, liberty and democracy. We are on the front lines and will continue to be on the front lines against those who reject those principles. In order to effectively counter terrorism, we must stand united as an international community against that global threat to our way of life.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Colombia.

Mr. Ruiz Blanco (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I want to thank the Arab Republic of Egypt for convening this meeting and for the concept note (S/2016/416, annex) prepared for this debate.

Colombia strongly rejects acts of terrorism and violent extremism in all their forms and manifestations, out of our conviction that such acts are criminal and unjustifiable, regardless of their motivations and at whatever time or by whomever they are committed. Those acts pose a grave threat to the life, well-being and fundamental freedoms of all peoples and threaten international peace and security by undermining the values and principles of States, their democratic institutions, the rule of law and the freedoms enshrined in and promoted by the various instruments of the United Nations. Terrorism cannot and should not be associated with any religion, ethnicity, community or nationality. We must therefore unite to forcefully fight that scourge based on objective criteria.

At this point, I would like to clarify that, although Colombia has not suffered the terrible effects of violent extremism based on religious grounds, it has, for years, suffered great violence owing to a domestic conflict in which terrorism was used as a tool of action. As a result, my country has acquired good practices and capabilities to deal with such new phenomena, which could yield notable results.

The Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (A/70/674) offers Member States a series of recommendations for countering the threat, which Colombia considers useful. Of particular interest to this debate are the recommendations on prevention. States must work with relevant members of their local communities and with non-governmental actors in the development of strategies to counter all kinds of incitement to acts of terrorism, regardless of their purported justification. We are aware of the importance of the participation and involvement of civil society and local communities in efforts to help the victims of terrorism, especially in the promotion of trust, harmony and intercultural respect and in efforts to boost individual and community resilience against terrorist activities.

Women should be included in all stages of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of counter-terrorism efforts. Those efforts must be accompanied by the promotion of education for girls and women, which in the medium- and long-term, enables them to increase their capabilities, knowledge and resources and which, by extension, will enable them to play a more active role in the actions that States and societies take in countering terrorism and violent extremism.

The policies for the prevention of terrorism and violent extremism must also focus on our young people, providing them with opportunities to study and work and play an active role in their societies. That will minimize the risk of their being radicalized and recruited by terrorist groups. Similarly, I consider it important to highlight the crucial role of the communications media in sensitizing and mobilizing public opinion against the atrocities committed by terrorist groups, using an approach that emphasizes the rights of victims and that forcefully condemns the perpetrators of terrorist acts. The international media have already begun to contribute to the common goal of creating spaces and opportunities in which we can raise awareness of the tragic consequences of terrorism.

At the same time, with regard to prevention, we must assess the negative impact of the cult of violence, to which many, in particular those same younger populations, are exposed. Under no circumstances can we accept the paradigm in which the use of violence is presented as an option for resolving conflicts or dealing with situations of any kind.

Finally, Colombia supports the further strengthening of international cooperation aimed at supporting the victims of terrorism, as called for in the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. It is vitally important that Governments, international and regional organizations, non-governmental organizations and the media continue the work of supporting the victims of terrorism. My delegation reiterates its commitment to continuing to work actively with the international community in the discussion of this issue and in particular on the deliberations that will begin this week for the fifth Review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. Dialogue, cooperation and concerted efforts are indispensable to a civilized coexistence free of the scourge of terrorism.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Pakistan.

Ms. Lodhi (Pakistan): I would like to commend you, Mr. President, for convening today's debate focusing on the ways and means to counter the malevolent propaganda and twisted narratives of terrorism.

Pakistan aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by Kuwait on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation countries.

Pakistan unequivocally condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. There can be no justification for the killing of innocent people, but we know from history that even the most abominable of mass murderers have crafted twisted webs of narratives to justify their heinous acts. Terrorists do the same.

Terrorism cannot be associated with any religion, culture or region. The ideologies and narratives of the various terrorist groups emanate from diverse sources. But three characteristics seem common to all. First, they seek to recruit followers by stoking people's sense of fear and deprivation and by manipulating the prevailing perceptions of victimization and injustice that fuel extremism. Secondly, they create a web of complex and false interpretations of beliefs, disseminating them as widely and as often as possible. And thirdly, their narrative seeks to provide a path to an illusionary salvation.

If we are to defeat terrorism, it is imperative that we counter that schematic approach of terrorists comprehensively and at every step. There is no point in emptying a tank through one tap, while it is being constantly replenished through others. Terrorists seek to exploit fears and grievances, real or perceived, emanating from diverse factors, local or external.

While individual Member States should do all they can to address socioeconomic conditions and political factors at the national level, we must also address the international drivers that contribute to injustice, inequality, hatred and deprivation.

The condoning of foreign interventions and occupation and the denial of the right of self-determination, all in violation of the agreed principles of international law, provide fertile ground for terrorist propaganda to take root. The persistence of those conditions and the failure of the international community to redress genuine grievances of the weak against the powerful are important factors that create the breeding grounds of terrorism. If conflicts spawn terrorism and if terrorist narratives feed off conflict situations, it is critical to seek an end to those conflicts in order to deprive terrorists of their oxygen.

In the second area, we lack concerted efforts to counter the messages and rationales spewed out by terrorist groups that fuel violent acts. In the battle of ideas, much ground has been lost to the narrative of terrorists owing to, for example, the failure to prevent xenophobia, Islamophobia and other forms of discrimination, the confusion of hate speech with free speech, and the profiling of entire communities on the pretext of seeking to strengthen security measures, which is counterproductive. Such actions have only strengthened the divisive notions of "us" and "them", which is what the terrorists prey on. They want to make us believe that a clash of civilizations is inevitable and even necessary.

We must not allow them to do that. Not only do we need to develop a more robust counter-narrative against terrorist ideologies, we also need effective communications strategies appropriate to our digital age. The use of social-media platforms by terrorists is unprecedented, particularly in the way they engage young people, disseminate messages and mobilize recruits. That requires effective responses to such messages on our part, efforts to counter online radicalization and measures to prevent such groups from exploiting digital space.

The terrorist narratives and ideologies are aimed at radicalization, which leads from indoctrination to action. There are several ways to counter that phenomenon. First, we need to invest in efforts to create opportunities. We must offer hopeful alternatives to the narratives used by terrorists, who seek to invoke fear and hold out the false promise of an idyllic future. Secondly, we need to make the young aware of the dire consequences of following the violent path prescribed by terrorist ideologies. Many examples can be found among people who have renounced terrorism. Thirdly, we need to prevent any glorification of terrorist acts, whether intended or unintended, in the print or broadcast media.

My country's national action plan to counter terrorism contains six specific action points that directly and indirectly seek to counter the narratives and ideologies of terrorists. We are committed to fighting this battle of minds, as much as we are committed to fighting the terrorists on the ground. Pakistan stands ready to share its national experience with the international community in order to further our common goal of defeating terrorism and eliminating violent extremism.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I give the floor to the Permanent Observer for the League of Arab States to the United Nations.

Mr. Fathalla (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate Egypt on assuming the presidency of the Security Council this month. I would also like to express my appreciation for the convening of several important high-level meetings on pivotal issues such as countering terrorism and its impact on international peace and security. I would like to thank Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson; Mr. Mohi El-Din Afifi, Secretary-General of Al Azhar Islamic Research Academy; and Mr. Stephen Crown, Vice-President and Deputy General Counsel of Microsoft, for their exhaustive briefings.

We met last month for an open Security Council debate on countering terrorism and its impact on international peace and security (S/PV.7670). We are meeting again today to confirm the will of the international community to assume global governance of international peace and security. As I mentioned in the meeting last month, to do so will require a willingness to replace many concepts and mechanisms of international action with new concepts and mechanisms created by the Security Council consistent with existing policies, with a view to implementing the relevant resolutions of the Council in order to minimize the threats to international peace and security.

We recognize that the implementation of Security Council resolutions could be much more effective. With the upcoming review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in June, together with the efforts to implement the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (A/70/674), which was discussed in Geneva in April, international action could be strengthened and the tools at our disposal shaped so as to be more complementary, giving rise to a clearer vision of the way in which the international community should respond to extremist and terrorist ideologies.

Over the past 10 years, expressions of hate have increased, especially in our region. Over the past five years we have seen a sixfold increase in the use of social media, which has further given voice to the prevalent attitudes in the region. Promoters of terrorist and extremist ideologies have used social media to spread hatred, taking advantage of the existing political, cultural and social vacuum, in order to achieve objectives that are in complete contradiction with the three religions that come from our region. Those ideologies are also in contradiction with the principles, traditions and customs of our region, which is the cradle of all of the world's civilizations.

Technological progress should have been used to build prosperity for the region and the entire world, rather than be used by extremist forces for purposes of sabotage and destruction of one of the world's most important civilizations. That is why it is urgent that we undertake the steps necessary to fight and prevent the propagation of extremist ideologies, which will require, first and foremost, addressing the root causes of the problems in the region and resolving them one by one. They represent the main threats to international peace and security.

Today, we are forced to confront many types of hate speech, all reflecting the range of extremist and violent ideologies. They have come to light at a time when the media and its platforms have not yet achieved a mature sense of the value of professionalism, thereby creating a gray area between actions to achieve political transformation that seek to fulfil the purposes and principles of the United Nations, on the one hand, and exploitative media feeding off the current situation in the world, which is rife with social conflicts and crises, on the other. The situation in our Arab region, in particular, presents a fertile breeding ground for social, political and economic problems that have led to erroneous interpretations of religious thought, which then form the basis for erroneous ideologies rooted in hate, extremism and incitement to violence. The situation calls for developing new tools to marginalize extremist ideologies and promote religious moderation.

In that context, some believe that the Security Council should undertake a review under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, with a view to criminalizing hate speech, the incitement to terrorist acts and the recruitment of foreign terrorist fighters via electronic media and to preventing terrorist organizations and affiliated individuals from propagating their extremist ideas and ideologies, using the Council's unified sanctions lists. Incitement to hatred in all of its aspects should be a crime, whether it is linked to terrorist acts or to terrorist organizations' use of social and other media.

This might be a propitious time for setting up a Security Council working group that could look into prosecuting terrorist organizations that propagate terrorist ideologies on the Internet and elsewhere. If such a working group were created, it could have a situation room, the central mission of which would be to follow terrorist and extremist publications throughout the day with a view to taking the necessary steps to shut them down.

In that context, I would like to refer to some of the statistics that Mr. Steven Crown of Microsoft shared with us today. He mentioned that there were more than 1 billion electronic messages on the Internet each day, which gives an idea of the importance of direct communication for those companies and especially for Microsoft in the quest to find a solution for dealing with those messages that simply spread extremist ideologies.

Such a mechanism would prevent the dissemination and promotion of extremist ideologies and could also lead to ending financing or mobilization of any type carried out through social or electronic media platforms. It could include any type of Internet communication technology, including audiovisual, other Internet resources and any type of relevant communication based on use of the Internet or its applications. I believe that those ideas are in line with the Council's resolutions concerning various ways to counter terrorism and especially its methods of dissemination through the Internet and related resources, in particular resolutions 2253 (2015) and 2178 (2014), which enable action on the part of the Council.

In that respect, I wish to underscore the importance of the Arab media forum, which was held jointly with the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1373 (2001) concerning counter-terrorism, the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force and which took place in July 2015 here in New York. I also wish to emphasize the importance of the action plan concerning communications to combat violent extremism to 2020. It was adopted in 2015 as a preliminary step in the implementation of the joint Arab strategy to combat terrorism, which was adopted in 2014.

In conclusion, ascribing all violent and extremist ideologies to a religion is not possible. Religion exists to reform the conduct of the person, with a view to ensuring prosperity, peaceful coexistence among many peoples and groups, so they may live together in peace and prosperity, based on the human rights enshrined in the texts of the divine religions.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of India.

Mr. Akbaruddin (India): Terrorism is one of the most serious threats to global peace and security today. It affects all of us. May I, therefore, join all of those who have extended their condolences to you, Sir, over the sad deaths of the Egyptian policemen who were killed by terrorists while performing their duty.

Since the beginning of the year, more than 4,000 lives have been lost in more than 40 countries to terrorist attacks. As many as 1,000 people have lost their lives since the Council last met, one month ago, to discuss the issue of terrorism (see S/PV.7670). We therefore support the President's initiative to discuss ways to address this common challenge in today's open debate on countering the narratives and ideologies of terrorism.

Terrorism thrives on and is sustained by transboundary networks for its ideology, recruitment, propaganda, funding, arms, training and sanctuary. No one nation alone can tackle that menace decisively. Tackling terrorism demands extensive coordination and effort. The fight against terrorism has not known success so far owing to insufficient international cooperation. The Hydra-like monster of terrorism continues to spread across continents, in developing and developed countries alike, aided by targeted propaganda of hatred disseminated over ever-growing social media networks that were designed to bring people together.

The rise of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant is drawing foreign terrorist fighters of vastly varying ethnicities, social backgrounds, education and economic status from distant continents, demonstrating the immense complexities of the push and pull factors involved. It is increasingly clear that no single path or set of paths exists to define the process of radicalization, thereby ensuring that the task of mounting a counter-narrative will be difficult. One of the common threads is that the overwhelming proportion of foreign fighters are males between the ages of the mid-teens and the mid-twenties. That may be an indication of a possible way to address the issue.

The ideological framework that guides terrorist groups is their real strength. It is built upon very specific and extreme arguments. The fight against terrorism is not a confrontation targeting any religion. It is a struggle between the values of humanism and the forces of inhumanity. It is also a battle that must be won through the strength of our values and the real message of religions.

A concerted effort is needed to deny any space for the spread of extremist ideologies and narratives and to launch specific counter-narratives. The counter-narratives must address theories of victimhood, conspiracy and the denial of inconvenient facts that are contained in the terrorist ideologies. It requires building a wider social consensus against the inhuman activities and crimes committed by the terrorist groups. The active engagement of local community and religious leaders may be necessary in order to disseminate more moderate and mainstream teachings challenging the radical and motivated interpretations.

Since the phenomenon of radicalized foreign or homegrown terrorists defies any easy generalizations, it is important to identify the nature of the perceived individual or group grievances that push them towards membership in such extremist groups. Radicalization can be prevented only if young people develop a stake in their mainstream sociopolitical and economic milieus. Providing long-term care for the de-radicalized is also an important aspect in convincing the possible recruits of alternatives available to them.

Moderate views can be spread effectively through the education system, civil society, opinion-makers and domestic political leadership. The powerful role of media — print and electronic — cannot be underestimated in this debate. The misuse of social media to disastrous effect by terrorist groups needs to be monitored carefully and countered, with due safeguards for respecting the freedom of expression. At the same time, positive and balanced narratives about the fallacies of extremist ideologies and the successes of peaceful coexistence need to be disseminated more widely.

Countering the narratives of terrorism is a long-term preventive endeavour. Equally important is effective counter-terrorism through monitoring and intervention, which requires close international collaboration. Narrowly perceived interests have often prevented the framing of legal frameworks for international cooperation and even the effective implementation of sanctions that could restrict possible threats. We hope that countries realize that the threat is serious, knows no borders and requires a more coordinated response. The effort should start, with renewed vigour and determination, here at the United Nations.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Brazil.

Mr. De Aguiar Patriota (Brazil): Let me start by thanking you, Mr. President, for organizing this open debate which is very well timed, as it allows us to go further into issues that were discussed a few weeks ago at the Geneva Conference on Preventing Violent Extremism and at the high-level debates organized by the President of the General Assembly. It will also provide useful inputs for the upcoming review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

I would also like to thank Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson for his briefing and extend my thanks to Mr. Mohi El-Din Afifi and Mr. Steven Crown. I express my condolences to the Egyptian presidency and the Iraqi delegation, in particular, over the recent victims of terrorism in their countries.

The concept note (S/2016/416, annex) that was circulated encourages us to discuss possible elements of a comprehensive strategy for countering the narratives of terrorist groups, which would contribute to the work to be undertaken until April 2018 by the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1373 (2001) concerning counter-terrorism. A central element of that effort should be ensuring that the international community does not overlook the underlying causes of terrorism, including exclusion, marginalization and discrimination. Terrorist groups such as Da'esh, Al-Qaida, Boko Haram, the Al-Nusra Front and Al-Shabaab have been attracting recruits by offering them a sense of purpose, belonging and identity that they probably failed to acquire elsewhere.

It is equally important not to lose sight of the fact that no country is immune to this phenomenon. It is widely reported that foreign terrorist fighters have been recruited even in the most prosperous countries. Promoting inclusion should be at the basis for any narrative aimed at countering extremist ideologies.

We must take a critical look at measures that could be inconsistent with respect for diversity and the acknowledgement of our common humanity, such as discriminatory laws enabling the profiling of particular groups. Certain responses to the refugee crisis are of concern, as they might be increasing rather than decreasing the risks associated with violent extremism conducive to terrorism. The credibility of any narrative depends on its coherence. For example, we cannot uphold a responsibility to protect civilians plagued by terrorist attacks and human rights violations in regions distant from our homes and then ignore the victims' plights when they knock on our doors seeking refuge.

Our efforts should also contribute to dispelling the stereotypes that have tended to associate terrorism with specific cultures, religions or ethnic groups. We must be wary of rhetoric that fuels xenophobic prejudice. I commend those Governments around the world that have rejected such attitudes. Promoting genuine dialogue among religions and cultures is pivotal for creating much-needed environments of tolerance and mutual respect. Initiatives such as the Alliance of Civilizations have made positive contributions in that regard and should be acknowledged.

Consistency is another necessary feature of counter-radicalization narratives, or "positive inclusive narratives" as suggested by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands. Part of that challenge lies in the need to avoid selectivity. It is our duty to condemn terrorism and to prevent its spread, wherever and whenever it may strike. Victims in one country are no less deserving of our attention than those in another. Civilian casualties resulting from counter-terrorism are no less tragic, from a human perspective, than those generated by other causes. Furthermore, the potential of certain measures to fuel increased radicalization should not be underestimated. Terrorist groups seek to provoke Governments into over-reaction, so as to exploit narratives of abuse and oppression. Unfortunately, many Governments have fallen into that trap.

Conformity with international law is a prerequisite for the effectiveness of our efforts against terrorism and violent extremism. If measures are implemented in violation of the Charter of the United Nations, or other texts of international law, including human rights, humanitarian and refugee law, their legitimacy will have been compromised, rendering them counterproductive.

The use of the Internet and social media by terrorist groups illustrates the evolving nature of the challenge that we are facing. Having been conceived to bring people together, those platforms are also being used to incite hatred and recruit. While acting against those trends, we must guard against transgressions with respect to the freedom of expression and the right to privacy. We should simultaneously foster digital inclusion since the Internet and the social media are powerful tools for disseminating challenging messages of respect and dialogue.

The limitations of counter-terrorism strategies solely based on repressive measures have been demonstrated in tragic ways. Today, terrorism is more widespread and claims more lives than 15 years ago. It is encouraging, therefore, to identify the growing recognition of the centrality of prevention, as demonstrated by the support for the initiative of the Secretary-General to present a Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (A/70/674).

Brazil expects the Security Council to translate such concerns into practice by recommitting to diplomatic efforts as a privileged vehicle for promoting peace founded on justice. Let us not lose sight of the protracted conflicts that directly or indirectly fuel terrorist agendas. Our collective failure in dealing with the ongoing crisis in the Middle East, including Israel and Palestine, is an obvious case in point. Reaching a durable solution to that conflict would represent a powerful action in our efforts to undermine the narratives of terrorist groups. Let us not prevent the Security Council from getting involved in prevention.

There can be no justification for terrorism. Brazil reiterates its commitment to a multidimensional response to that threat and remains convinced that cooperation and dialogue within the United Nations will enhance our capacity to achieve the results that we need. We will only succeed if we join efforts on the basis of shared values and enhanced multilateral cooperation.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Safaei (Islamic Republic of Iran): I wish to thank you, Mr. President, for organizing today's debate, which offers us a timely opportunity to exchange views on the narratives and ideologies of terrorism. I also thank Mr. Jan Eliasson, Sheikh Mohi El-Din Afifi and Mr. Steven A. Crown for their comprehensive briefings, and commend Al-Azhar University for the steps that it is taking to thwart extremist narratives. I must also condemn the terrorist attacks by Da'esh, today, in Baghdad and last week against police officers in Egypt, and offer my condolences to the peoples and Governments of Egypt and Iraq and the families of the victims.

Violent extremism is the most critical challenge currently facing the Middle East, and as borders worldwide go unrecognized, many other parts of the world are threatened as a result of the spreading scourge. Syria, followed by Iraq, is among those nations that have borne the brunt of the atrocities and barbarity practiced by extremist groups. At the same time, the blind violence committed by the individuals and groups affiliated with Da'esh in various parts of the world highlight the widening scope of the threat posed by the rise of violent extremism.

It is evident that the takfiri ideology, which has nothing to do with Islam, lies at very core of the predicament that we now face. Therefore, the international community needs, first and foremost, to focus on that vicious ideology and its proponents, who seek to instil hatred and anger in the hearts and minds of young people everywhere in the Islamic world and beyond. Those with wealth and power have undertaken for many decades to diffuse that mode of thinking in the larger Muslim community and around the globe and force it upon peoples and communities near and far, thereby advancing their shortsighted agenda. Al-Qaida and the Taliban represent their first so-called successes, and Da'esh and the Al-Nusra Front and its affiliates are the latest.

For many decades, the proponents of that perverse ideology have pinpointed individuals susceptible to their schemes, then bankrolled them, providing all necessary cover and support, in order to bring pressure to bear on various Governments to condone their activities, and so on. And the results have been the atrocities, rapes, slavery, burnings, beheadings and innovative, creative ways of killing that we have sadly come to learn about through the media.

The opponents of the takfiri or excommunicative ideology include those who do not believe in that ideology, who are on a very long list of so-called non-believers, which includes Shiites, Christians, Jews, and moderate Sunnis, and the list continues on and on. The atrocities committed against the Yazidi people reflect the intentions and behaviour of adepts of the takfiri ideology towards minorities. The social-media accounts glorifying the horrific massacre of 1,700 Iraqi air-force cadets in Tikrit in June 2014 portended what those extremists intend to do wherever they prevail.

In parallel with the need to highlight the roots of Da'esh and its affiliates in the historic development of their extreme ideology, we must also be mindful of the strong impact of Iraq's recent bloody history on the formation and growth of the current violent extremist groups. Political and military interventions in the region, especially in the past decade, have exacerbated the situation, created an enormously fertile breeding ground for extremists and helped the most radical among them to grow. With the Syrian crisis and the support that the extremists have received from some wealthy individuals, quarters and States within and outside the region, they have found a new breeding space.

As in any war, in order to defeat violent extremism, the battle must be fought, first and foremost, on a cultural and ideological front. Those who have so far supported that extreme ideology should reconsider. It is very encouraging that Islamic community leaders everywhere, including Sunni scholars and clerics, have defied Da'esh's threats and denounced and rejected its ideology.

At the same time, full compliance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations is also a must, as it helps drain the breeding ground for extremism. The contributing factors that help create space for extremism, such as the occupation of the Palestinian land by Israel, which constitutes the greatest form of terrorism, must also be addressed. Other contributing factors like dictatorship, poverty, corruption, discrimination and marginalization are also important. And so is the need to counter Islamophobia, which plays right into the extremists' hands and lends credence to their messaging. Likewise, funding extremists and condoning their recruitments through lax border control should end. Anything that undermines the unified front against extremists and provides them with space, such as the invasion of Yemen, should be halted as well.

Finally, Iranians of all ages and affiliations, particularly the youth, have been consistent in rejecting and fighting violent extremism from the Taliban and Al-Qaida in Afghanistan to Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula, Da'esh and others similar forces in Yemen, Iraq and Syria. We also have tried to help fight extremists on the ground and provide a path to combat their ideology, including through promoting Dialogue among Civilizations and A world against violence and violent extremism (General Assembly resolution 70/109).

Let me conclude my statement by rejecting the baseless and worn-out accusation by the representative of the Israeli regime against my country and my Government. When it comes to terrorism, that regime has to be accountable for two reasons. First, it has been engaged in all sort of terrorist activities to create the regime and, thereafter, in suppressing the legitimate resistance of those whose lands are under its occupation. Secondly, this regime should also be held accountable as its occupation and the misery and grievances it creates are exploited by extremist groups for recruitment and to justify their crimes.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I give the floor to the representative of Indonesia.

Mr. Djani (Indonesia): Let me begin by thanking His Excellency Mr. Sameh Shokry Selim, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Arab Republic of Egypt, for presiding over the earlier session of the open debate and you, Mr. President, for convening this very important meeting. I would also like to thank the Deputy Secretary-General, the Secretary-General of Al Azhar Islamic Research Academy and the Vice-President of Microsoft for their briefings.

Indonesia associates itself with the statements to be delivered by the representatives of Kuwait and Thailand on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, respectively.

The concept note (S/2016/416, annex) for this debate underlines the grim reality of the global nature of terrorism. Terrorist groups recruit and train new members, operate and seek funding anywhere they wish, regardless of State boundaries. Supported by those capacities, certain terrorist groups, notably the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, Boko Haram and other groups linked to Al-Qaida, have devastated regional peace and stability and threatened the stability of other regions. Terrorist groups have also used information technology extensively to spread messages of hatred and violence. Their propaganda has also contributed to the rise of lone wolf terrorists. With those facts in mind, it is imperative to strengthen synergy at all levels and all aspects of our cooperation.

Countering the narratives and ideologies of terrorism is indeed critical in preventing terrorism and violent extremism. Indonesia believes that more efforts must be made in this regard with a view to establishing effective strategies at the national, regional and global levels. Along that line, I wish to share some of Indonesia's experiences in developing and implementing strategies to counter narratives and ideologies of terrorism, as part of our contribution to the efforts to enhance global cooperation in this particular matter. First, our national efforts to counter narratives and ideologies of terrorism are conducted within the framework of the blueprint on deradicalization, which focuses on at least three critical programmes: dialogue, empowerment and reintegration.

Dialogue is conducted among convicted terrorists and a team of experts in religious, social and psychological counselling. It aims at building trust and eradicating the ideology of terrorism. Education and training are provided to equip former terrorists with practical trades to assist them in their reintegration into society, following the conclusion of their sentencing period. The role of family and women is important in educating individuals and assimilating them into the communities.

It is important to note that, in order to succeed, we must be able to identify the root causes of the ideologies of terrorism. Based on our experience, the misinterpretation of religion is not the only reason behind the ideologies of terrorism. There are many other factors that must be taken into account, such as individual backgrounds and motivation, or collective grievances and victimization.

It must be emphasized that deradicalization is a long and challenging process. At the same time, we also have to be watchful of the danger of the terrorists spreading their ideologies among inmates in prison. Yet the result of our de-radicalization strategy is tangible. Today, terrorists who have denounced their ideologies are among our allies in countering terrorism. On account of their past, they are in a good position to explain the danger of terrorist ideologies, as well as its impacts on the public, the terrorists themselves and their families.

Secondly, deradicalization programmes must be complemented by counter-radicalization, which aims at providing the public with narratives to counter those of the terrorists. Our counter-radicalization programmes involve many important stakeholders, such as educational and religious institutions, youth organizations, media, women, victims of terrorist attacks and even former terrorists, at both the national and provincial levels. Within the context of counter-radicalization, we have put in place appropriate measures to prevent the spread of terrorists' messages through the Internet. We also use the Internet to prevent, detect and deter acts of terrorism. That include creating websites to disseminate messages of peace and respect and the gathering of information that may lead to the prevention of terrorism and prosecution of terrorist suspects.

Thirdly, we remain faithful to the belief that respecting human rights contributes to effective counter-terrorism efforts. This is so since respect for human rights, while countering terrorism, can help secure the confidence of terrorists and their families in the Government. Building this confidence is a fundamental element in de-radicalization because the ideologies of terrorism are often built upon views of the illegitimacy of the Government. Moreover, violations of human rights and lack of good governance may contribute to the spread of ideologies of terrorism.

In conclusion, I wish to underscore the importance of the sharing of best practices and lessons learned in de-radicalization and counter-radicalization, as part of our continuous efforts to strengthen States' capacities. In that regard, Indonesia will continue to utilize the Jakarta Centre for Law Enforcement Cooperation as a platform for regional and global cooperation in capacity-building and invite others to do so.

We look forward to a closer collaboration among States and the United Nations system in this important task.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I give the floor to the representative of Belgium.

Mr. Buffin (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this debate on countering narratives, as this is one way to counteract the phenomenon of terrorism. This scourge is particularly worrisome to Belgium, which was a target of horrific attacks on 22 March, following those in France, Lebanon, Pakistan, Côte d'Ivoire, Turkey and many other countries in the recent past. I would like to align in spirit with our debate all the victims of these atrocities. These attacks are attacks against the international community and against our values.

We know how a terrorist group like Da'esh makes harmful use of social media and radical discourse. They spread broad-based propaganda and they adapt it to their audience by adopting the codes of youth and of the regions concerned. Besides this widespread propaganda, what makes Da'esh particularly effective is the investment in time and resources dedicated to each of the individuals they hope to recruit. Recruiters are trained for this purpose and, by following a specific procedure, they find the type of narrative that is most likely to lead that particular individual to join their ranks.

We will never be able to thwart this extremely effective machine by using only standardized, banal and negative discourse. We cannot simply produce counter-narratives. We have to convince people that there are better things to do than to give aid to Da'esh and commit terrorist acts. We have to coordinate our efforts at the international, regional, national and local levels, right down to single neighbourhoods, and we have to ensure the participation of civil society.

I would like to share some thoughts about the conditions that can enable us to produce effective counter-narratives. First, it is important to adapt a narrative to its target audience. Every culture, population sector and social group has its own sensitivities, which is why it is so important for each State to design its own strategy for countering the radicalization that leads to terrorism and terrorist recruitment. That is exactly what the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (A/70/674) is promoting in its call for the adoption of national plans. Its section on strategic communication, the Internet and social media (see paragraph 55), details the importance of adapting narratives to the local context, encouraging research on Internet use in a context of violent extremism, promoting values of tolerance and freedom of opinion, working with victims and protecting journalists.

Secondly, an effective counter-narrative must also be based on knowledgeable analysis of the motives of potential terrorists, which often vary greatly. In that regard, the results of projects such as the returnees interview programme developed by the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force could prove very useful.

Thirdly, it seems probable that the most effective type of narrative will be those with a positive message; too often, the messages are negative, saying, for example, "Do not go to Syria. They are lying and it will not be what you think it is." A positive message should convey through very concrete examples that young people can play an active role in society that is rewarding both for them and for the community as a whole. In short, they can imagine a positive future for themselves. That assumes, however, that all the key actors around them — the public authorities, school, the local community, businesses, culture and the media — have the means to ensure that this hope can become reality.

Lastly, and most importantly, the counter-narrative most likely to change the direction an individual has taken is face-to-face dialogue that makes it possible to work with potential terrorists, giving them time and personal attention. Such counter-narratives generally rely on those close to such young people — their families, friends and religious leaders. They are also the hardest to implement, because they require resources and expertise. The United Nations undoubtedly has a role to play in that regard in capacity-building and in providing and promoting the exchange of experiences.

Belgium has established several instruments aimed at combating violent radicalization that I will describe briefly.

First, scientific research has shown that building resilience during the early stages of exposure to radical ideas has a protective effect against radicalization, which is what Belgium has sought to do through a project named BOUNCE, aimed at young people and those close to them. More than 100 local representatives have been trained in the use of BOUNCE resilience tools. The project has been positively assessed by the European Commission and will be expanded to several European cities.

Secondly, as part of a broad prevention and safety programme, 19 Belgian cities and municipalities have added the fight against violent radicalization to their prevention and security plans, supported by a significant supplement to their budgets allocated by the federal Government. In that regard, the Belgian Ministry of the Interior is also organizing quarterly coordination meetings at which cities and municipalities are kept informed about developments in radicalization and share their local experiences.

Belgium, in cooperation with the United Kingdom, has launched a project open to all European Union member States and financed by the European Commission: the Syria Strategic Communications Advisory Team. It aims to develop and share best practices in the area of strategic communications with the goal of preventing and countering acts of terrorism and violent extremism, especially those linked to foreign terrorist fighters. The project includes a small team of experts from European Union member States who have developed successful communications strategies for dealing with the issue of foreign terrorist fighters.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Ja'afari (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on the Arab Republic of Egypt's leadership of the Security Council for this month. I welcome the presence of Mr. Sameh Shokry Selim at today's important meeting. We are grateful to Egypt for convening it.

Before I begin, I would like to express our sincere condolences to the Government and the people of Egypt for the victims of the heinous terrorist attack a few days ago. I would also like to convey our condolences to the Government and the people of Iraq for the hundreds of victims of the car bombs today in Baghdad. They are suffering from the very same terrorism that we are enduring in my country, and thus today's topic is therefore very timely.

Some five years have elapsed since the assassination began in Syria of the principles of international law, the Charter of the United Nations and good-neighbourly relations around our territory. After exhausting every possible means of destroying Syria — its State, its people, its infrastructure — including terrorism, media misinformation, recruiting foreign terrorist fighters and mercenaries from every corner of the globe, facilitating terrorist groups' use of chemicals, trafficking in the suffering and hopes of millions of refugees and internally displaced persons, creating opponents abroad who are in alliance with every thief around the world sponsoring terrorism and criminality — after all of that, we are justified in telling those involved in fuelling and lengthening the crisis to keep their hands off Syria. Enough misinformation, enough intervention in our internal affairs under pretexts that have been proven to be false in Syria, Iraq, Libya and many other States.

Since the start of what some like to call the Syrian crisis, the Security Council has held hundreds of meetings and adopted dozens of resolutions and statements. It has set up fact-finding mechanisms and has quite seriously been unable to take a single step to bring pressure to bear on the sponsors of terrorism; to stop the export of terrorists and mercenaries from abroad into Syria and Iraq; to control borders in order to halt the flows of terrorists; to end the Qatari-financed treatment of injured terrorists in Israeli and Turkish hospitals; or to prohibit broadcasts by television stations from Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Turkey and London inciting people to sectarian terrorism that utterly violates all the relevant Security Council resolutions.

My delegation has repeatedly stressed its full support for any sincere effort to confront the threat posed by terrorism and its poisonous ideologies and to uphold the values of peace, dialogue and respect for religious, ideological and cultural diversity. We continue to assert that terrorism is the gravest threat to the world today; it is the common enemy of all mankind. Therefore the United Nations and the Security Council must take up their responsibilities to coordinate and promote international cooperation to combat terrorism. However, such cooperation must be very far removed from selectivity and double standards.

It is unreasonable for persons to be deemed to be terrorists in France, Belgium, Spain, the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Australia and Tunisia while elsewhere they are called jihadists, non-State armed groups or the moderate Syrian armed opposition, and showered with money, weapons, entry visas, intelligence and protection. Indeed, they are brought to Syrian borders and their entry into Syria is guaranteed.

Some have created a State for terrorism called the Caliphate, with an official flag and with media sites. Words like "Islam" are used. It has two capitals, in both Syria and Iraq, and therefore an international coalition was set up to confront it. Today the scenario of constructive chaos is complete. The entire world is watching the theatrics of the so-called anti-Da'esh coalition. That scenario is not serious. It is not credible, particularly since, instead of targeting Da'esh elements, the so-called international coalition is destroying the infrastructure of the Syrian State, of the Syrian people, under the pretext of combating terrorism. At the same time, the coalition is turning a blind eye to the Da'esh trade in petroleum and archaeological treasures with Turkey and their export through Turkish territory to Israel and European countries.

The mask has now fallen from the faces of the States that are sponsoring takfiri terrorism in my country, the region and Africa. The efforts of those murderous Governments are doomed to fail. The series of lies and crocodile tears shed because of the suffering of the Syrian people — caused by the very Governments claiming to combat terrorism — have ended. Many WikiLeaks documents have disclosed the role of those Governments in targeting Syria following the invasion and destruction of Iraq. Those who manufactured Da'esh, the Al-Nusra Front, Al-Qaida, the Al-Fatah Army, the Army of Islam, the Al-Ahrar Al-Sham, the Jund Al-Aqsa, the Liwa Al-Sultan Murad, the Turkestan Liberation Party, Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab, the Salvation Front and dozens of Al-Qaida-affiliated terrorist organizations; those who provide weapons, money, training, fatwas, political and media protection and describe them with such terms as "political violence" and "jihadism" in order to hide their true terrorist nature — they comprise the very party that has been holding up the flag of terrorism and should be the common enemy of all mankind.

Confronting the poisonous ideologies of terrorist organizations and their supporters and financiers is no less important than confronting the use of biological or chemical weapons by terrorist organizations. In that regard, we cannot turn a blind eye to the important role taken by the Governments of States sponsoring terrorism. The Saudi and Qatari regimes are abusing Arabs and Muslims through the dissemination of Wahabi extremist thoughts and their erroneous thinking that distorts Islam. Together with the Turkish regime, they are providing all kinds of support to takfiri terrorism that crosses borders and crosses continents — the very terrorism that my country is confronting.

The honourable achievements of the Syrian Army, with the support of our friends in the battle against terrorism, including the liberation of the historic city of Palmyra and its liberation from Da'esh, the return of art and music to its old amphitheatre — those are the victories of civilization and light over terrorist ideology.

My delegation stresses the need to end Israeli occupation of the Syrian Golan and other occupied Arab territories and to put an end to the practices of the occupation forces that support terrorism and led to the expulsion of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force from the separation zone in the occupied Syrian Golan and to their replacement by terrorist elements from the Al-Nusra Front and the Yarmouk Martyrs Brigade .

In conclusion, my delegation stresses that terrorists must not be rewarded. Their sponsors must not be rewarded for their criminal acts. It is unfortunate and shameful for Europe to conclude an agreement with the Erdogan regime, which is supporting terrorism in a way that allows Erdogan to blackmail Europe, to take advantage of the situation of refugees and internally displaced persons and to profit from their suffering. That is the result of the practices of Erdogan, thanks to which his citizens have received visa-free travel to Europe, a base achievement.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I give the floor to the representative of Germany.

Mr. Braun (Germany): We thank the Egyptian presidency for organizing this very timely debate. All too often, our discussions centre on the effective use of law enforcement and military capabilities to combat terrorism. But as the concept note (S/2016/416, annex) rightly points out, we must combat terrorism in a comprehensive manner. Countering the root causes of violent extremism, especially the underlying ideological tenets that correlate with terrorist acts, is essential to defeat global terrorism.

Terrorism is not a new phenomenon. We have witnessed it for centuries in Europe and elsewhere. However, completely new is the apparent effortlessness with which terrorists are recruited today. Modern technologies make it possible for terrorists to spread their murderous ideologies across the globe in literally seconds. Perhaps the most troubling feature of that new development is that those messages often resonate even with those who have not espoused extremist views before. In too many cases, the messages have been a catalyst for terrorist attacks. In view of those dangerous developments, we must redouble our efforts in combating the spread of ideologies of terrorist organizations.

Critical to limiting the effect of extremist propaganda is a confident society, one in which citizens are compelled to uphold peace and tolerance. We cannot take those values for granted; they have to be reaffirmed and defended every day. The exclusion of minorities, the lack of democratic participation, the suppression of certain opinions or beliefs, and grave human rights violations in general are all well-documented factors that make people more susceptible to violent extremist narratives. Therefore, all Governments — and I include in this appeal all the countries who have just spoken before the Council — are well advised to strengthen structures that promote inclusive dialogue grounded in the values mentioned.

As was highlighted in the General Assembly's high-level thematic debate last week, religious leaders and faith-based initiatives can play a significant role in promoting tolerance and countering radicalization. In my country, the German Islam Conference, which was founded ten years ago, has been instrumental in that sense. It has brought together Government representatives and Muslim organizations in an effort to discuss important issues, such as the introduction of courses on Islam in schools and universities and the State-funded further education of imams. The German Islam Conference aims to empower Muslims to participate in society, while seeking to advance the integration of Islam into the cooperative relationship that exists in Germany between religious communities and the State.

Currently, the fight against the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) is at the top of our counter-terrorism agenda. Germany is an active partner in the global coalition against ISIL. We are confident that the military campaign will be successful, as the territories controlled by ISIL are being diminished by the day. It is important, however, that liberated areas do not become breeding grounds for terrorism in the future. We must help to quickly stabilize those regions and restore trust and confidence among the population. We have to demonstrate that there is a positive future in a multi-ethnic and multiconfessional society. As Co-Chair of the Stabilization Working Group, Germany has initiated a whole range of projects to that end.

My country continues to engage actively in the fight against violent extremism in other international frameworks, including the European Union, the Group of Seven Roma-Lyon Group, the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). As this year's OSCE Chair, we will host in Berlin later this month an OSCE conference that will focus on preventing and countering violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism. We are convinced that the conference will, inter alia, give us valuable input in our efforts to draft a national action plan on preventing violent extremism, which will be published shortly.

I would like to close by reiterating that Germany remains firmly committed to taking action against terrorism, ensuring accountability and tackling its root causes, including by exposing its faulty narratives and ideologies.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*) I now give the floor to the representative of Australia.

Ms. Bird (Australia): Terrorism is one of the critical challenges of our time. As terrorist groups such as Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) have expanded their reach and influence, it is evident that many find their narratives and tactics appealing. Countering that appeal and preventing the spread of violent ideology is essential to their long-term defeat and is a priority for Australia. Australia recognizes that the pathways to radicalization are complex and that there is no single pathway. Each individual experiences unique drivers to violent extremism. That challenge means that there is no single solution to combating violent extremism.

Australia's efforts to counter the narratives and ideologies of terrorism aim to reduce the reach and appeal of extremist narratives. We do that by limiting access to their extremist propaganda online through content removal and digital advertising, by undermining the appeal of extremist messages through community-led counter-narrative activities, and by hardening the audience by increasing the digital resilience of youth so that they are less likely to take propaganda at face value. Governments cannot act alone in meeting this challenge, and Australia collaborates with civil society, industry and creative industries to compete with the pace and scale of the dissemination of violent extremist content.

Australia is committed to a regional and international approach to meet the shared challenges of countering the narratives and ideologies of terrorism. Regionally, we are working through programmes aimed at marginalizing the appeal of extremist thinking and messages and building community resilience to extremist messages by promoting values such as democracy, human rights and tolerance. In line with Australia's national countering violent extremism strategy, we strongly support the role of civil society organizations in countering violent extremist ideology.

In 2015, Australia hosted a regional summit on countering violent extremism. We are pursuing the implementation of the outcomes from that summit, which include connecting civil society, improving regional partnerships between Government and non-governmental actors, building the technical capability of grass-roots organizations and developing counter-messaging resources tailored to the South-East Asia region. Working closely with partners and allies in the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL and the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum, Australia supports strategies dedicated to disrupting, degrading and destroying the toxic narratives of ISIL and other terrorist groups and to challenging their ideology. And we are seeing results.

As the threat from terrorism and violent extremism has evolved, so must the response. The global nature of terrorist narratives and the need to counter them globally underlines the critical role of the United Nations. Australia strongly supports the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (A/70/674) as a practical approach to preventing violent extremism. There is a pressing need for the international community to come together to combat the threat of terrorism. The review of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in June presents Member States the opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to the strategy and to continue to support efforts to counter terrorism and terrorist ideology. Australia is committed to doing its part.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of South Africa.

Mr. Mminele (South Africa): My delegation would like to congratulate Egypt on its assuming the presidency of the Security Council for this month, and we wish to express our appreciation for the convening of this important debate on countering the narratives and ideologies of terrorism. We also thank you, Mr. President, for providing us with a comprehensive concept note (S/2016/416, annex) to guide our discussions.

Indiscriminate attacks — such as the three bomb attacks in Iraq today on innocent civilians, including women and children — by increasingly ambitious terrorist groups persist with alarming frequency across the world. This is leading to untold human suffering and is provoking an unprecedented humanitarian crisis in some regions of the world. Terrorist groups' adept use of modern communications technologies to recruit, to incite violence and to spread their distorted ideologies of hate and intolerance poses a serious and ever more complex threat to international peace and security. Through fear and force they sow instability and continue to deprive those they control of the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The threat of terrorism is universal, transcending borders, and we have reached a stage where no country can declare itself free of this scourge. Similarly, no country can deal with it on its own. For that reason, it is important that the international community adopt adequate measures to counter it. The United Nations, with the broad range of expertise and tools at its disposal, is best placed to lead the coordination of international efforts in this regard. South Africa continues to support the central role of the United Nations in countering terrorism and strengthening the multilateral system to take effective measures within the framework of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. Initiatives to support improved coordination and cooperation among United Nations entities involved in countering terrorism, and improved coordination between the United Nations and regional structures, should be encouraged and supported.

We acknowledge the work being done by the General Assembly and the Security Council in guiding the international community's response to that challenge. The General Assembly, with its universal membership, has a valuable contribution to make, especially with regard to the upcoming review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. Together with the Secretary-General's Plan to Prevent Violent Extremism (A/70/674), it provides a valuable opportunity for all Member States to assess the progress thus far and to make recommendations for more effective cooperation in countering terrorism, particularly with regard to the creation of new mechanisms.

It is my delegation's view that the creation of any new mechanism should be measured against its contribution to facilitating and assisting international counter-terrorism efforts, rather than duplicating work that has already been done in other structures. South Africa continues to support a multifaceted, comprehensive approach to dealing with terrorism in all its complexity.

Terrorism cannot be defeated militarily and cannot be dealt with solely through the use of force or coercive measures. To counter the narratives and ideologies of terrorism in the medium- to long-term, international cooperation must also address the factors that give rise to this scourge. There is an urgent need to understand and address the conditions and contexts that make terrorism an attractive option for the disaffected.

Engagement, including through education, eliminating inequalities and working with disadvantaged groups of society, particularly young people, and developing appropriate strategies at the national, regional, and international level remain critical. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to countering this threat; it is up to each subregion and country to define its specific conditions and take appropriate action in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and in observance of international law.

Terrorism cannot and should not be associated with any religion, nationality or civilization. We therefore welcome and support initiatives and efforts that promote dialogue, tolerance, diversity and understanding among peoples, cultures and religions. Acts of mobilization directed against individuals, communities or nations simply because of their faith, language or race cannot be justified. The international community should seek political solutions to resolve long-standing conflicts. In this context, terrorism should not be equated with the legitimate struggles of peoples under foreign occupation to achieve their inalienable right to self-determination, as recognized by the United Nations.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate my delegation's commitment to continuing to work within the United Nations and other multilateral structures to seek ways to counter effectively and efficiently the threat posed to international peace and security by terrorist acts.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Norway.

Mr. Brende (Norway): No country is immune to violent extremism. From Baghdad and Bamako to Paris, Brussels and Istanbul, we have had tragic reminders of this global peril. Threats to our security are more complex than they have been for decades, and the most serious among them is violent extremism. It must be defeated at all levels by Governments and citizens alike. When and where necessary — as in Syria and Iraq — we must also be willing to use military means.

At the same time, we must stop the flow of finances and foreign fighters, improve our development policies, strengthen fragile States and offer young people education, jobs and opportunities. It does not help to win the day-to-day battles in Iraq if we lose the battle for the future. The likes of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) can be degraded and destroyed only if their ideology is dismantled. We must refine our counter-messaging, bearing in mind that messages are only effective when accompanied by substance and real progress. Young people must be able to find jobs and opportunities, to be seen and to influence their own lives — in the Middle East, North Africa, Europe and elsewhere.

As we refine our methods, extremist groups are finding new ways to spread their propaganda, finance their activities, recruit people and carry out attacks. The sharing of intelligence and information between our countries must be improved. The core values of peace, tolerance, democracy, human rights and rule of law are what the terrorists are fighting. If we want to defeat terrorism, we must defend the values that gave birth to the Security Council 70 years ago.

As ISIL is losing ground in Syria and Iraq and its recruitment seems to be slowing down, we must increase our focus on the threat that foreign fighters pose when they return home. We must also do what we can to prevent new ISILs from emerging.

The international community must adapt to a changing security landscape. The Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (A/70/674), building on the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, is timely and much needed. It focuses on national, regional and United Nations activities that can become drivers for change. The Plan seeks to tackle conditions conducive to terrorism while aiming to ensure respect for human rights and the rule of law. It addresses how we can effectively counter the manipulative messages of violent extremism by advocating freedom of expression and the values of tolerance, pluralism and understanding. These are all necessary ingredients for building peaceful and inclusive societies.

Governments have the primary responsibility for preventing extremism, but they can only succeed if they work closely with civil society, including with young people and women. That is why Norway has initiated the launch of two civil-society networks. First, there is YouthCAN, which is a network of young people working together against violent extremism, not least by developing alternative narratives. Secondly, we have established an alliance of women's organizations. Many of the women in the alliance have suffered directly from extremism in places like Syria and Iraq. There can be no more qualified and credible voices in speaking out against terrorism than its victims and witnesses. Norway will continue to work with these networks and help them expand.

We all have a role to play in countering violent extremism. Our efforts must be amplified and our methods refined. We need a strong United Nations to show global leadership. We need a United Nations that is fit for purpose and has sufficient resources to do its important part. Norway is pleased that the General Assembly earlier this year welcomed the initiative of the Secretary-General to develop and present his Plan of Action to Member States. We can fight terrorists with soldiers and police and indeed we will. But in the long run, we can only prevail if we understand the root causes of violent extremism and commit ourselves to translating this understanding into action.

We cannot rest in our quest for answers and solutions. Violent extremism is a threat to us all, so we must fight it globally, at home and together.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the Permanent Representative of Canada.

Mr. Blanchard (Canada) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank the Egyptian delegation for convening today's debate on this important and relevant topic. The concept note (S/2016/416, annex) was helpful and raised several important issues. At the outset, I would emphasize that in the experience and approach of Canada violent extremism cannot be associated with any particular religion, nationality, civilization, or ethnic group.

My statement today will focus on three specific topics in the fight against terrorism: the role of public-private partnerships, positive alternative narratives rooted in action, and multilateral coordination.

(*spoke in English*)

First, effective counter-narrative strategies require meaningful partnerships with the private sector and civil society and have to include innovative approaches that tap into the growing body of knowledge about countering terrorist narratives. We have seen that some terrorist groups are effective in using the Internet to advance their aims. The content they produce appeals to the generation that grew up with YouTube and has contributed to radicalization towards violence.

Yet our efforts to counter terrorist narratives online must not legitimize controls that hinder peaceful use of the Internet. Governments must forge partnerships with Internet-based companies and online communities. They must also help create open, safe spaces for debate that appeal to regional audiences, taking into account cultural realities and sensitivities.

Furthermore, the process of radicalization to violence is complex and highly individualized. In fact, Government efforts to counter radical messages can be ineffective or even counter-productive, partly due to real or perceived credibility gaps with target audiences. Therefore, partnerships with credible local parties must also be part of our strategy.

Secondly, we understand the importance of having a positive alternative narrative that stands on its own. Governments have an important role to play in this endeavour. Despite some stumbles, the Canadian Government has been actively enabling the building of a peaceful, pluralistic society throughout Canada's history. It is our belief that diversity and inclusion are crucial to healthy and prosperous societies that are resilient against extremism — not just as aspirational values, but as a proven path to peace and prosperity. The recent resettlement of 25,000 Syrian refugees in Canada, with more still to follow, is a part of that story.

We are not perfect, but we believe that Canada has a lot to contribute to the international community in terms of our experience building a peaceful and resilient society, particularly at a time when there is a pressing need to prevent violent extremism. Against that overarching story line, Governments should encourage social and political dialogue that undermines narratives spun by terrorists, spearhead research and knowledge sharing, engage young people and empower those who are marginalized. To help us focus our efforts, Canada is establishing an office dedicated to community outreach and counter-radicalization. The office will advance research, coordinate local, national and international initiatives, work with civil society and support community engagement.

(*spoke in French*)

In the short term, multilateral efforts related to communications and counter-messaging are relatively new and more needs to be done to develop them. Canada stands ready to share its experience and expertise with the international community. Canada is actively engaged in the communications and counter-messaging efforts of the Global Coalition to Counter the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant. Canada strongly supports the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (A/70/674), which emphasizes the need to address underlying conditions to prevent the development of violent extremism. We also support the efforts undertaken by a range of multilateral organizations and forums, including the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations and the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Kenya.

Mr. Kamau (Kenya): Let me begin by congratulating you, Mr. President, on behalf of the Kenyan delegation, on assuming the presidency of the Council for the month of May. I commend you for the manner in which you have conducted its affairs. I also thank you for hosting this important debate at a time when the United Nations is preparing to review its Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy to align it with current realities and developments. We too welcome the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (A/70/674).

Let me express our sincere condolences and sympathies to our Arab brothers in Iraq, who today have once again suffered an outrageous attack by terrorists. Iraq has suffered for way too long under the terror of events in the country.

What was impossible to imagine a generation ago has come to pass. Nearly all the international conflicts on the agenda of the Security Council have violent extremist groups as main protagonists. We have witnessed the emergence of groups such the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS) (Da'esh), Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab, Al-Qaida and numerous affiliates and other non-State actors in violent conflict hotspots across the world. Those groups have exploited the conflicts, the attendant State collapse, socioeconomic grievances and geopolitical disorder, especially in the Middle East, to survive and to thrive.

Violent extremist movements hide behind religion to pursue political ends. In Kenya, the Somali-based Al-Shabaab, an Al-Qaida affiliate, utilizes a Salafi-jihadi ideology through selective reading of Islamic religious texts and histories in order to justify its own hideous acts. They use claims of global and local victimization of Muslims to assemble militant recruits willing to carry out suicide and mass casualty attacks against civilians and infrastructure in our country and neighbouring countries. The group retains an ambition to establish an East African caliphate to replace the current secular States and other religious traditions.

We believe that the international community's counter-narratives in response to the challenge of violent extremism are manifestly weak. It has failed to adequately address frustrations and hopelessness, particularly among the youth. Just this morning in a room next door, we listened to Asha Mansour from Tunisia, who challenged us to in that high-level meeting by asking us why it is that today, in a country like Tunisia, where the Arab Spring was born, so many young people have turned to recruitment by ISIS.

Failure to address frustration and hopelessness, mainly caused by economic injustices, endemic conflicts, human right violations and social inequalities seems to have left many young people throughout the world vulnerable to extremist ideologies. Migrants and refugees are also targets of violent extremist ideology due to their vulnerability. Refugee camps have been used as recruitment and staging grounds by violent extremists. That is our experience in Kenya, which has driven our Government, after 25 years of hosting over 500,000 refugees, to finally decide to shut down those camps. Similarly, the use of cyberspace, particularly the social media on the Internet, is posing new challenges in the war against terrorism and extremism.

Kenya's strategy to counter narratives and ideologies of violent extremism seeks to facilitate an inclusive and total rejection of extremist ideologies hostile to the Kenya's nationhood and way of life as a secular State. It seeks to promote narratives that minimize sympathy for terrorism as a means to change society or politics. Allow me to share some of the lessons leant from our experiences that we believe to be crucial to the success of any strategy, be it local, national or international, in countering extremist ideology and the terrorism that it drives.

First, there is a need to prevent conflicts and to expeditiously resolve the existing ones. No narrative to counter any ideology can succeed if communities are still engaged in open hostilities. The primacy of politics — which we take extremely seriously — in the resolution of conflicts is key to attaining sustainable solutions.

Secondly, we need to improve coordination, both nationally and regionally, through the timely sharing of information and best practices. There is need to reach out to and involve all sectors of society — including through community policing, religious leaders, private sector and civil society — because it is only through those partnerships that we can hope to attain success.

Thirdly, investments in deradicalization, rehabilitation and reintegration are key to winning the war of ideas with violent extremist groups.

Fourthly, Governments should formulate inclusive policies to address the various socioeconomic and political drivers behind the violent extremist narratives.

Fifthly, adequate resourcing and capacity-building are critical at all levels, as are investments in educational programes and early warning systems to ensure timely corrective interventions.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate the importance of preventing conflicts, the separation of religion from politics, the proper coordination and sharing of information, and the role of amnesty in fostering counter-narratives against the ideologies of violent extremism. The Kenyan delegation looks forward to the continued debate during the forthcoming review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, and to receiving the Security Council in Nairobi later this week, where we hope to take this conversation even further.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I give the floor to the representative of Kuwait.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait): I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), in my capacity as Chair of the OIC group. At the outset, allow me to express to the delegation of the Arab Republic of Egypt, a fellow OIC member State, both our congratulations for presiding over the Security Council this month, and our gratitude for its convening of an open debate on such a timely and important topic as countering the narratives and ideologies of terrorism.

The rise and spread of violent extremism across the world in general and Da'esh terrorism in particular, as well as its increasing ability to reach out to the masses through media, make it imperative to effectively counter the narratives and ideologies of terrorism. Terrorism and violent extremism remain two of the most serious threats to every society, as well as to the international peace and security as a whole. Regardless of its ethno-religious identity, geographical location, socioeconomic conditions or political stance on the world stage, every nation is more or less susceptible to the growing threat of terrorism. Therefore, never in history has a comprehensive and concerted response to terrorism been needed as much as it is today.

The OIC believes that the first step of such an effort should be to deprive terrorist groups of legitimacy in the eyes of their primary support base by repudiating the very arguments they use to justify their criminal acts. In this regard, it would be appropriate and necessary to correct first and foremost a misnomer that is often repeated, and even wrongly cited in the concept note of this open debate (S/2016/416, annex). There is no such thing as a "religiously inspired terrorist group", as no religion either condones or inspires terrorism. Yet, there are terrorist groups that exploit religions.

As reflected in numerous Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, the OIC member States believe that terrorism cannot be and should not be associated with any religion, ethnicity, race or nationality. Accordingly, no one should refer to Al-Qaeda, Boko Haram, Da'esh, the Al-Nusra Front, Al-Shabaab and other terrorist groups as being religiously inspired. On its part, committed to fighting terrorism and countering violent extremism, the OIC works towards delegitimizing terrorist ideologies, through developing counter narratives to such extremist ideologies and propaganda by elevating credible and authentic religious voices that support tolerance and non-violence.

With respect to countering the appeal of Da'esh specifically, the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers, at its forty-second session held in Kuwait, adopted a resolution entitled "Crimes of Da'esh" and called for the effective implementation of Security Council resolutions 2170 (2014) and 2178 (2014) in order to prevent that terrorist group from recruiting foreign terrorist fighters. In this regard, the OIC believes that building the capacities and capabilities of States is critical to the effective implementation of Security

Council resolutions. Furthermore, the resolution also calls for the imposition of stringent measures against social media sites that are used by Da'esh in order to propagate its heinous ideology and recruit sympathizers.

The OIC is extremely disturbed by the fact that terrorist groups, including Da'esh, are increasingly exploiting cyberplatforms to spread their messages of hatred and to disseminate their distorted interpretations of the Holy Koran. Such messages are aimed at exploiting the socioeconomic and political frustrations of Muslims. It is therefore of the utmost importance that States, within the framework of international law and while respecting the freedom of expression, identify and shut down such media platforms, while also engaging with communities to counter the narratives of terrorists and their propaganda. To that effect, the OIC has been working to establish its messaging centre, based at the OIC headquarters in Jeddah, as part of its efforts to counter terrorism and violent extremism.

The OIC has consistently been at the forefront in the fight against terrorism and violent extremism. Cooperation with key international and regional partners in combating terrorism is among the key objectives of the OIC Charter. Adopting its code of conduct and its Convention on Combating International Terrorism in 1994 and 1999, respectively, the OIC was among the first to formulate a clear and principled position against terrorism.

Moreover, the OIC 2025 Programme of Action, adopted at the thirteenth session of the Islamic Summit Conference in Istanbul last month, is yet another important milestone. The Programme of Action recognizes the need to improve the utilization of information and communications technologies to counter the exploitation of cyberspace for terrorist purposes, including radicalization and recruitment. In addition, the OIC Summit reaffirmed its support for the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and the importance of addressing the causes of violent extremism in a comprehensive manner.

Extremism flourishes when human rights are violated. It is therefore crucial that collateral damage and human catastrophe in counter-terrorism operations be avoided, as they fuel extremism and radicalization. The OIC is gravely concerned ovwere the mounting trend of intolerance and discrimination against Muslims, and the consequent surge of Islamophobia, which is an affront to the human rights and dignity of Muslims. The OIC believes that extremism grows within the context of an economic, social and political environment. It is essential that the contexts that provide conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism and violent extremism, such as historical injustices, occupation, deprivation, exclusion, discrimination and marginalization, be addressed with equal vigor.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I give the floor to the representative of Kazakhstan.

Mr. Abdrakhmanov (Kazakhstan): I thank the Egyptian presidency for its vision in drawing attention to the need to counter the narrative and combat the ideologies that give rise to terrorism. Combating such deeply rooted belief systems and perceptions is a most difficult task, for they have taken a strong hold in many societies.

As a long term approach, several measures should be considered, such as exposing false notions, improving public diplomacy and partnering with deradicalized persons. New, revised and inspiring messages have to be put forward to the younger generation, calling for cooperation with parliamentarians, religious leaders, educators, the private sector, civil society and the media. Much work has to be done in families, schools, communities and prisons. We encourage close interministerial coordination within each Member State's Government, as well as collaboration within the United Nations system, United Nations country teams, together with regional and international organizations.

Kazakhstan has been at the forefront in striving to bridge the ever-growing clash of civilizations, religions and cultures. It was because of our efforts and those of our partners that the General Assembly designated 2010 as the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures and 2013-2022 as the Decade of Rapprochement of Cultures, together with UNESCO. A declaration by the Presidents of Kazakhstan and Turkey on Islamic rapprochement at the recent OIC Summit in Istanbul is another such example.

World leaders will need to be engaged in a drive to identify how to promote peace and heal divisiveness. These ideas, values and principles constitute the core of the manifesto "The World. The Twenty-Firstt Century", authored by my President, Nursultan Nazarbayev, which is a new security paradigm on war and peace. He proposes therein to establish under United Nations auspices a global coalition of States for peace, stability, trust and security to end current conflicts, which are fertile environments for radicalism. Last September, my President also suggested establishing a United Nations -led counter-terrorism network with a unified mechanism, comprising various entities, to end all forms of terrorism and bring perpetrators and their supporters to justice.

According to our President, the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy should be made legally binding. We believe that the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (A/70/674) must be fully supported by all Member States. Kazakhstan has ratified all global instruments on countering violent extremism. Currently, we are engaged in the joint action plan to implement the Global Strategy in Central Asia, and have hosted two meetings in Almaty on the regional plan, as well as two training workshops of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004).

With a view to promoting dialogue, my country convenes triennially the Congress of the Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, bringing together religious and political leaders to promote peace. At the national level, we hold inclusive and democratic interactions among citizens and youth groups in every locality through the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan. On 6 May, His Excellency Mr. Mogens Lykketoft, President of the General Assembly, at the initiative of Kazakhstan and Jordan, convened a high-level conversation on religions for peace, with very significant recommendations for the way forward. Above all, we have formulated Kazakhstan Strategy 2050, which is very people- centred and whereby the needs of all sectors of our society are met on the basis of justice and equality, thereby laying the foundations of durable social peace and solidarity.

Let us not forget that development and peace are two sides of the same coin, and the President of Kazakhstan has suggested that the international community adopt a plan for a global strategy 2045 during the United Nations centennial year, with a view to establishing equality among nations and thereby ending all conflicts. Narratives and ideologies know no borders, so Kazakhstan will work steadfastly on multilateral activities to spread the culture of peace and tolerance.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I give the floor to the representative of Saudi Arabia.

Mr. Al-Mouallimi (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, allow me to congratulate Egypt on assuming the presidency of the Council for this month. We are proud to see Egypt presiding over the Security Council. We are confident, Sir, that your expertise and wisdom will have a major effect on ensuring the success of the Council's work. I also thank you for convening this open debate on threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts.

I thank the Deputy Secretary-General for his valuable briefing early in this meeting, as well as other briefers.

My delegation welcomes the adoption of presidential statement S/PRST/2016/6 on fighting terrorism. We are committed to the statement and reiterate our support for the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy as the Organization's comprehensive umbrella for fighting terrorism.

Fighting extremist rhetoric and ideologies that fuel terrorism is among the most urgent challenges facing the international community today and one of our main priorities. Indeed, we have taken the initiative to fight extremism and terrorism in word and deed at all levels — local, regional and international. In that regard, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has adopted a comprehensive counter-terrorism strategy. We have not only adopted security measures, enacted counter-terrorism legislation and worked to dry up the financial resources of terrorism, but we have also diagnosed the intellectual reality and assessed the root causes of the proliferation of violent extremism and ideologies. We have also developed an intellectual security strategy based on three key pillars: prevention, rehabilitation and care. We have established the Mohammad Bin Naif Counselling and Care Centre, which reabsorbs those convicted of terrorism-related crimes, rehabilitates them and reforms those at risk of espousing extreme ideologies.

We have striven to share our pioneering experience in intellectual security based on the principles and teachings of Islam, which promote tolerance and peaceful coexistence, with other States through several initiatives and international and regional activities. We submitted a proposal to establish an Arab office for combating terrorism and extremism that was adopted at the thirty-first session of the Arab Council of Interior Ministers, held in Morocco on 13 March 2014. We also participated with Spain and Austria in opening the King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue, in Vienna in

2014, with the aim of combating extremism, promoting a culture of respect and building peace.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was a pioneer in urging the international community to fight terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. We have called on the international community to adopt a comprehensive plan, in line with international law, to end terrorism while maintaining the sovereignty, security and stability of all States. In that regard, we helped to establish the United Nations Centre for Counter-Terrorism. We have taken part in setting the Centre's strategic priorities, including countering the rhetoric of violent extremism and developing the strategies necessary to that end, including on the Internet. We have provided capacity-building support to Member States. We have also announced that we will establish a centre to fight nuclear terrorism in Vienna.

We are facing a wave of intellectual extremism whose tragic repercussions are being felt around the world. Those who believe in extremism and marginalization, urge hatred and the dehumanization of others, and justify the use of violence against them are extremists, be they Christians or Muslims, Jews or Buddhists, Hindus or atheists. The mongers of violent rhetoric are no less dangerous than those who perpetrate terrorist acts. Failing to fight them could drive us into further vicious cycles of violence, killing and terrorism.

Some have sought to adopt extremist rhetoric that distorts the image of Islam and links it to violence. We have been following with serious concern the increase in this rhetoric, the ongoing acts of marginalization which amounts to violence and the terrorism carried out against some Muslims, which amounts to blaming Muslims for the indiscriminate acts of some extremists, including calls for prohibiting Muslims from entering a certain country and increasing the searches of Muslims, and other measures of marginalization, which only multiply the risk of terrorism and facilitate its proliferation.

Palestine remains the principal cause of our Arab and Islamic nation. In fact, Israel continues to resort to all forms of violence and excessive force against the lone Palestinian people. It has been acquiring Palestinian lands and it continues with its colonization day after day. It is imposing its hegemony on Al-Quds Al-Sharif. Throughout all of this, it is basing itself on an extremist, terrorist, racist rhetoric that calls for killing, displacement and destruction. It turns a blind eye to the dangers of this rhetoric based on violence and State terrorism. Failing to expressly condemn it, failing to fight it and failing to hold accountable those who promote it is closely linked to the growing rhetoric of hatred, violence, extremism and terrorism by both parties to the conflict. The ongoing Israeli occupation of Arab occupied territories in Palestine, Syria and Lebanon is in itself a terrorist act that denies the Arab people in this region their legitimate rights.

We have been witnessing a great rise in dangerous sectarian rhetoric in our Arab region and in the Islamic world, fuelled by Iran, through which it is trying to exacerbate conflict and feed sectarian strife. It is exploiting mosques and the media. It is also exploiting official statements. This has provided a breeding ground for the proliferation of extremism, secretarianism and terrorism. Moreover, Iran continues to support armed sectarian militias and terrorist groups, such as the terrorist group Hizbullah in Lebanon.

Syrian authorities continue to perpetrate hideous crimes through their gangs and forces. It is making use of foreign groups and chanting sectarian slogans. That has provided a breeding ground that has fuelled violent extremist rhetoric. It has contributed to the proliferation of the so-called Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham and Al-Nusra Front. The failure by the international community to provide protection for civilians in Syria is one of the main reasons for the proliferation of violent extremist ideologies and one of the main reasons driving thousands of young people from all corners of the world to join the ranks of Da'esh and the Al-Nusra Front. Therefore, the ruling regime and terrorist groups in Syria are two sides of the same coin which feed off each other. It is unrealistic to expect to put an end to terrorism in Syria without a true transition in power, in line with the first Geneva communiqué (S/2012/523, annex) and the relevant Security Council resolutions.

In conclusion, allow me to reiterate that, first, terrorism has no justification, regardless of where and under what circumstances it is carried out. Secondly, countering terrorist ideologies requires a comprehensive and coordinated effort. Thirdly, fighting terrorism requires fighting violent extremist rhetoric against Muslims and Islam. It requires putting an end to occupation, refraining from supporting oppressive sectarian regimes or sectarian militias and their extreme ideologies. It requires working to achieve a comprehensive development for all peoples.

The last few years have resulted in massive human loss and human rights violations caused by the proliferation of the phenomenon and ideologies of extremism, violence and terrorism. Those are also the main reasons that this phenomenon continues to exist. In order to address them, we must be courageous and bear the responsibility of listening to the voice of reason instead of narrow political interests. My delegation looks forward to continuing to coordinate and collaborate with the Council in this important work to ensure the stability and security of the region and to maintain international peace and security.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I give the floor to the representative of Jordan.

Mrs. Kawar (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to extend our sincere thanks and appreciation to His Excellency Mr. Sameh Shokry Selim, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Arab Republic of Egypt, for holding this important meeting on countering the narratives and ideologies of terrorism. I would also like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency.

At a time when campaigns of manipulation and recruitment by terrorist groups continue unabated, I would also like to thank our three briefers and welcome the adoption of presidential statement S/PRST/2016/6 on the issue under consideration. We commend the Egyptian initiative in this regard.

Jordan, under the leadership of His Majesty King Abdullah II ibn Al Hussein, King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, has always vigorously countered the ideologies and narratives of terrorism, in particular those of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS). One and a half years ago (see A/69/PV.6), His Majesty recalled before the General Assembly the serious threat of religious manipulation and other practices by terrorist groups around the world, in particular through social media and secret partnerships involving religious figures and stressed the need to face up to this danger and to reach peaceful and just settlements to political crises.

The continued political crises in many countries, in particular in our region, and the failure to reach peaceful settlements create a fertile ground for terrorists, exacerbate the problems and provide them with space to develop their agendas. Therefore, the restoration of peace and security to countries that undergoing political crises is the main tool to face up to this phenomenon. I would also like to stress that, although we firmly believe in the importance of military and security measures, we still stress the importance of strategies that address the intellectual and ideological dimensions.

I would like to stress that facing up to this phenomenon cannot succeed through unilateral governmental efforts, but rather all stakeholders must cooperate effectively and particularly through the following means. Religious scholars of all faiths — and I would like to thank the President for hosting the important figure from Al Azhar Islamic Research Academy — have boldly faced up to this dangerous phenomenon and they should raise their voices against religious manipulation and the ideologies of the traitors of our age, ISIS, who hide behind Islam when Islam has nothing to do with what they preach. They use it to justify their barbarity and violence against civilians, manipulating Islam in their own interests.

I would like to stress how important it is to ensure the verification of all those edicts by religious institutions and not to allow them a free hand to issue whatever edicts they desire. Under that elevated concept of religion, Jordan has launched various initiatives in that area, starting with the 2004 Amman Message and ending with the 2010 World Interfaith Harmony Week, focused on the importance of education, particularly regarding different creeds and beliefs, and emphasizing the peaceful and diverse nature of Islam.

We should also focus on young people and on protecting them from recruitment by terrorist organizations, ensuring that they have economic, political and social opportunities. Jordan has stressed the importance of the issue through its sponsorship of resolution 2250 (2015) on the relationship between young people and peace and security during its presidency of the Council in April 2015 and in the Amman Youth Declaration, adopted at the Global Forum on Youth, Peace and Security in August 2015.

We also stress the importance of working with social-media companies and Internet service providers and of coordinating Government efforts in that regard, while ensuring full respect for human rights and the principles of international law. Terrorists are making effective use of those communication channels, which are also very important on the military and security fronts, particularly in the battle for cyberspace.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize how crucial this issue is. It will require us to seriously evaluate all our efforts to deal with the problem of terrorism, and in that regard, I commend the final paragraph of today's presidential statement (S/PRST/2016/6), which calls for establishing an international framework for dealing with that phenomenon and stresses our willingness to cooperate with the efforts of the Counter-Terrorism Committee and other relevant bodies.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Bangladesh.

Ms. Faizunnesa (Bangladesh): I would like to thank you and your delegation, Mr. President, for organizing today's open debate and for the informative concept note (S/2016/416, annex). Bangladesh aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the representative of Kuwait on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

Terrorism and violent extremism thrive on a set of corrosive narratives and ideologies. The true essence and understanding of any religion, nurtured and practiced over centuries, can hardly justify the skewed, fragmented and exploitative narratives propagated by terrorists and violent extremists. The international community must remain invested in preserving and promoting the core, mainstream message of peace, mutual respect and tolerance that lies at the heart of all religions. The misguided appeal of the messages of terrorists and violent extremists demands a cautious, context-specific and well-calibrated approach, marked by the active participation and ownership of religious leaders and establishments, civil-society organizations and the media, among others. It must be underpinned by a broader pursuit of a culture of peace and non-violence across the entire social spectrum.

We also need an objective assessment of the sense of deprivation, discrimination and exploitation at the national and international levels that terrorists and violent extremists tend to use to justify their self-serving agenda and means. It will be critical to demonstrate sincere and meaningful efforts to address such grievances with no discrimination or equivocation. It is unfortunate that the empowering tools of information and communications technology have assumed an unwelcome dimension in the hands of terrorists and violent extremists. Terrorists' smart use of social media and other online platforms has enabled them to suitably package and disseminate their messages, establish links with potential sympathizers across borders, recruit foreign terrorist fighters and often conduct their organized criminal activities with impunity.

In Bangladesh, we remain committed to addressing such emerging threats and challenges in a focused and determined manner and to building on our achievements in tackling terrorism and violent extremism, including through broader community engagement and enhanced capacity-building at the institutional level. In the light of our experience in that regard, we would like to emphasize five specific points.

First, the international response to terrorist and violent extremist narratives must be comprehensive and go beyond simply securitizing the discourse. In view of the various dynamics of radicalization, violent extremism and terrorism, we need nuanced responses, short- and long-term initiatives, hard and soft approaches and inclusive and participatory mechanisms for customizing responses in accordance with local needs.

Secondly, there must be a robust, consensus-based understanding among law-enforcement and prosecution authorities, information-technology companies, social-media administrators and human rights actors that can ensure appropriate filtering of and sanctions against online terrorist and violent extremist narratives and outlets, while respecting people's rights to access, privacy and freedom of expression.

Thirdly, we must focus on education at various levels, if we are to embed the right narratives of religion, culture and identity as part of global-citizenship education initiatives. We must be vigilant with regard to the creeping intrusion of violent extremist messages and propaganda into higher education. We emphasize the importance of continuing to work on developing curriculum standards for the religious education of the various denominations.

Fourthly, it will be crucial to give due consideration to the impact of terrorist and violent extremist ideologies on women in affected communities. We must revisit the traditional approaches, in which women are seen as victims of terrorism and violent extremism, and further explore their potential roles as agents of prevention, resilience and change at the community level — and even as perpetrators.

Fifthly, an effective strategic response aimed at countering terrorist and violent extremist narratives must reject any form of racial or xenophobic — particularly

Islamophobic — attitudes and categorization. We are particularly concerned about the added vulnerability of migrants and others in need of international protection, a problem that deserves further consideration at the global level.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to emphasize its support for any initiative by the Council, in coordination with the General Assembly, aimed at developing a comprehensive international strategy to address, with a sense of urgency, the deepening threats of terrorist and violent extremist ideologies.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Republic of Korea.

Mr. Hahn Choonghee (Republic of Korea): I would first like to thank the Egyptian presidency for arranging today's open debate on countering the narratives and ideologies of terrorism.

From Paris to Brussels to Istanbul, the spread of terrorism and violent extremism poses a grave threat to international peace and security. In their attempt to establish their so-called caliphate, violent extremists such as the adherents of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant are imposing a brutal reign of terror and inciting people to join them. They are also carrying out ruthless attacks on innocent people in various parts of the world. They are marketing terrorism over the Internet, through which they attempt to justify the ideology of terrorism. Through their strategic communication and messaging via new media, which is instant, unlimited, and personal, they are recruiting potential jihadists, also known as lone wolves, from all over the world. They are specifically targeting young people, who are vulnerable and susceptible to the narratives and ideologies of terrorism. Therefore, beyond military countermeasures, countering terrorism demands a comprehensive approach that deals with the fundamental drivers of the phenomenon, including addressing the root causes.

First, we must continue our efforts to raise public awareness of the danger of the narratives and ideologies of terrorism. The Republic of Korea has been doing its part by organizing a seminar on countering violent extremism, in partnership with the Hedayah Center in the United Arab Emirates last July, and by planning the hosting of the Korea-ASEAN workshop on the prevention of violent extremism with Indonesia this year. Furthermore, Korea will contribute $300,000 to the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate for capacity-building projects for vulnerable countries.

Secondly, strengthening education deserves more attention in order to tackle and alleviate the risk of the radicalization of youth and to give them an alternative view that is rooted in hope, harmony and peace. In that vein, in close cooperation with UNESCO, the international community and civil societies, the Republic of Korea will continue to work to promote Global Citizenship Education, which emphasizes the importance of core values such as human dignity, human rights, tolerance, diversity and the rule of law. In that regard, we commend UNESCO, which is now studying how Global Citizenship Education could contribute to preventing violent extremism. Furthermore, the theme of the 66th United Nations DPI/NGO Conference, to be held in Gyeongju, Korea, from 30 May to 1 June, is "Education for Global Citizenship: Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals Together". I hope this largest NGO Conference will discuss how global citizenship could be fostered to prevent violent extremism and radicalization.

Thirdly, we need to reinforce our efforts to prevent terrorists from abusing the Internet. As we have observed, their information and communications technologies and online media strategies increase the likelihood of youth radicalization. Preventing the abuse of the Internet and social media for terrorist purposes has been an important task for the Korean Government, and Korea will strengthen partnerships with private companies and civil societies, sharing relevant information and best practices with other States Members of the United Nations.

Last but not least, as emphasized in resolution 2178 (2014), the establishment of an effective legal framework and law enforcement will not only further deprive terrorists of resources and mobility, but will also strengthen international cooperation in tracking terrorist plots and suspects. In that connection, in March this year the Korean Government enacted and promulgated the Act on the Prevention of Terrorism for Protection of the People and Public Safety.

Our noble but arduous endeavour to combat terrorism demands both multidisciplinary efforts to bring the Government, non-governmental organizations and civil society together, but also full United Nations support, as suggested by Secretary- General Ban Ki-moon in the Action Plan to Prevent Violent Extremism (A/70/674).

The Republic of Korea will continue to work closely with the international community throughout the process and looks forward to discussing and finding effective strategies and ways to reduce and eventually end the threat of terrorism.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I give the floor to the representative of Qatar.

Ms. Al-Thani (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for the month of May. I wish you success in your endeavours. I thank Mr. Sameh Shokry Selim, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Arab Republic of Egypt, for presiding over this open debate. I would also like to thank the Deputy Secretary-General for his statement this morning.

The lessons learned from growing terrorism have proved that it did not start in a vacuum. It started and developed in a fragile environment fuelled by policies that neither assigned importance to social, economic and political problems nor dealt realistically with their root causes. Therefore, the successful eradication of terrorist groups depends on addressing the root causes that provide a fertile terrain for the increase in those groups. That was proved by the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Terrorism, adopted by the General Assembly in 2006, which was based on the root causes of terrorism.

Terrorism spares no one. It is a threat to international peace and security. Therefore the solution must be a comprehensive one, involving the joint efforts on the international community. It must end the root causes of that phenomenon. It must reject any use of terrorism to achieve certain political goals. We must also stress that the fight against terrorism must be in conformity with international law, the rule of law and the protection of human rights.

In the State of Qatar, when we call for the adoption of a broad-scale approach to address the root causes of terrorism, such a demand never undermines the importance of the need for an urgent military response to the imminent threats of terrorist groups. However, we believe that the military response must not come at the expense of addressing the root causes of terrorism and its causes. Military solutions alone are unable to solve all the problems. We must find comprehensive solutions that provide a better future for societies, ones that ensure stability and promote international peace and security.

The growing terrorism in our region is fuelled by the policies of a regime that has an interest in its presence to promote itself as a partner in the international campaign for fighting terrorism so as to ensure its own endurance, after its peoples and the world have rejected it because of its criminal policies and its blatant violations of international humanitarian law. In fact, the Syrian regime has used chemical weapons, starvation and indiscriminate bombing of civilians, and the destruction of infrastructures and capacities of the Syrian people. That has proved that that regime is the very embodiment of terrorism. It continues to target medical and civilians facilities, thwarting the delivery of aid to those in need. It continues to violate legal and moral instruments. It is a grave threat to international peace and security. This requires a strong, urgent stance from the Security Council to protect the Syrian people against the atrocities of the regime and not to allow impunity.

The State of Qatar has stressed on all occasions when we discuss this theme that terrorism must not be linked to any religion, ethnicity or culture. We must address its root causes, including the illicit use of force, aggression, foreign occupation, the denial of the right to self-determination of those under occupation, the absence of political and social justice and marginalization. That must come in line with a comprehensive treaty that includes a definition of terrorism. Therefore we stress that any attempt to link terrorism to any culture, religion, civilization, nationality or group will give a pretext to terrorists to justify their terrorist acts, to recruit young people.

Terrorism knows no religion, nationality or ethnicity. It is a criminal phenomenon that sows the seeds of chaos and undermines international peace and security. We stress the need to respect religions and promote tolerance. Religions do not call for terrorism; they call for tolerance, cooperation and solidarity. Therefore, an interpretation that is far from the preaching of tolerant Islam, which basically calls for peace, tolerance and coexistence, is rejected. Such an interpretation is an attempt to distort Islam for specific purposes. It provides pretexts for extremists and terrorists.

Based on our policy that attaches great importance to fighting violent extremism that leads to terrorism.

we have taken an initiative, with other countries, to hold on 3 June a high-level meeting of the General Assembly on youth and children affected by violent extremism, in line with the international efforts to fight terrorism. Moreover, given the great role of education in protecting children and youth against extremism and terrorism, we have adopted various programmes for the education and rehabilitation for Syrian refugees to ensure that they enjoy their rights.

In conclusion, we would like to stress that Qatar condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. Despite its many resources and perpetrators, we are committed to drying up the resources of terrorist groups and the tools they use to propagate criminal ideologies, including through the Internet. In line with the counter-terrorism mechanisms adopted by the international community, we will continue to promote our partnership with United Nations agencies in this regard to promote peace and security.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Georgia.

Mr. Imnadze (Georgia): At the outset, allow me to join previous speakers in congratulating the Egyptian presidency of the Council and expressing gratitude for convening today's debate.

Georgia aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union earlier today. In addition, I would like to make some comments in my national capacity.

The violence and brutality inflicted by terrorists on humanity is of grave concern. Egregious attacks on innocent civilians in different parts of the world make it obvious that terrorism — one of the most pressing challenges for the contemporary world — has become transnational and cross-border by its nature.

The situation in the Middle East overtly demonstrates how inhumanely terrorists can abuse the opportunities opened by modernity, modern technologies and growing globalization. In a technological age, recruitment no longer requires face-to-face communication. Da'esh terrorists are using modern encrypted networks, which poses a huge obstacle to law enforcement agencies in the process of combating terrorism. No single State can have full access to the relevant data.

To counter those challenges, Georgia has significantly streamlined its procedures for intelligence-sharing, and our special agencies have demonstrated the good practices of successful international cooperation. We added new articles to the criminal code, criminalizing participation in international terrorism and recruitment for membership in a terrorist organization. We also amended existing terrorist articles in accordance with the provisions of relevant international treaties and best practices. We have undertaken certain technical measures to tighten border control, including strengthening document security. Georgian law enforcement uses cameras, United Nations sanctions lists, terrorist watch lists and advance passenger name records on commercial flights at ports of entry, all of which helps detect potential terrorist movement. Georgia has adopted a strategy and action plan for combating money-laundering and terrorist financing. The Government established the Interagency Commission on Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions to coordinate the Government's immediate compliance with resolutions 1267 (1999) and 1373 (2001).

But despite the progress achieved, the Russian-occupied territories of Georgia continue to represent a major challenge for the Government of Georgia in its efforts to combat terrorism. Those areas, like black holes, could serve as a safe harbour for terrorists and other radical extremist groups that could potentially destablize the security situation in the entire region, while the seaports in the occupied areas could also be used for transporting foreign terrorist fighters.

The occupied regions of Georgia, like any other grey zones throughout the world where legitimate national and international mechanisms are nonexistent, have also been used for various illegal activities, including the smuggling of nuclear and radioactive materials. In that connection, I would like to remind the Council that over the past years, there have been a number of attempts at smuggling nuclear and radioactive materials through the occupied regions. The perpetrators were apprehended by the Georgian authorities, and the international community has been duly informed about that.

Full compliance with the obligations under the relevant international arrangements — such as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Biological Weapons Convention, resolution 1540 (2004) and so on — must stand out as the top priority for the international community. In that regard, I would like to remind the Council that, in cooperation with the United

Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute, the Government of Georgia organized high-level side events in October 2014 and again in 2015 on topics related to chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear (CBRN) risk reduction. In December 2015, Georgia, the Kingdom of Morocco and the Republic of the Philippines, as the Co-Chairs, established the United Nations Group of Friends on CBRN Risk Mitigation and Security Governance. It is aimed at promoting various CBRN-related topics in the United Nations by actively engaging with the Member States and the United Nations Secretariat. The Group will help to integrate the CBRN component in the international security architecture and foster regional and subregional cooperation on CBRN challenges. As we held our second meeting at the ambassadorial level in April, we once again encouraged other States participating in the European Union's Risk Mitigation Centres of Excellence Initiative to join the Group.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate Georgia's resolve and determination to further engage with our partner countries and international organizations with the common objective of reducing threats posed by terrorism and violent extremism.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to representative of the United Arab Emirates.

Mrs. Nusseibeh (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): The United Arab Emirates would like to thank His Excellency Mr. Sameh Shokry Selim, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Egypt, for presiding over this important debate. I wish to acknowledge the central and historical role that the Arab Republic of Egypt plays in maintaining international peace and security. My country commends the important role of Al-Azhar University, which has served as an intellectual and cultural beacon for centuries throughout the Islamic and Arab worlds. We would also like to welcome the adoption earlier today of the presidential statement (S/PRST/2016/6).

The international community recognizes that violent extremism has transcended national borders and become a global phenomenon. We therefore welcome the effortsto develop a comprehensive international strategy to eliminate this scourge. Our region has endured far too many nightmares perpetrated by terrorist organizations, which have absolutely no link to true Islam and which have become a major contributing factor to insecurity and instability.

We acknowledge the importance of a society's full participation in State-building, especially for the population of youths under 25 years old, who constitute 50 per cent of the population of Arab countries and who are targeted by extremist groups that exploit their grievances. Our counter-terrorism strategy also empowers women and integrates them into decision-making, including efforts to combat extremism, based on the concept of moderation, coexistence and tolerance throughout society. His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the country, has issued a decree to combat discrimination and hatred. In addition, we support efforts to foster a number of relevant initiatives aimed at reforming the religious narrative and returning to the noble vision of Islam.

Education also plays a significant role in countering terrorism. We need to promote research and religious scholarship in order to develop effective curricula for all levels of education with a view to building the resilience and capacity of Governments and communities. That is why we host the Hedayah Centre for Countering Violent Extremism, and the Muslim Council of Elders, chaired by the Sheikh of Al-Azhar, which aims to address the root causes of sectarianism.

We also need to develop ways to combat the new online recruitment tactics used by terrorists and extremists. To that end, we established, in collaboration with the United States, the Sawab Centre, which aims to combat extremist messages through social media. Furthermore, in terms of policy development, the entities we host are dedicated to building multi-stakeholder efforts to map, identify and remove the drivers of extremism. We are also eager to organize workshops with Government officials and experts in the technology sector to share information and encourage the development of counter-narratives, including the perspectives of female former foreign terrorist fighters.

The Arab region has historically exemplified pluralism and coexistence. Today, we call for a return to that model and vision. I would like to offer some recommendations for actions that would help to achieve this objective.

First, the Security Council must apply a single standard to all actors, all States and all perpetrators of occupation, State terrorism or foreign interference. Secondly, the international community, including the private sector, must expand its efforts to implement relevant existing norms to combat terrorism, including resolution 2178 (2014). Thirdly, we must discuss how best to rehabilitate and reintegrate foreign terrorist fighters who have defected from extremist groups and returned to their countries. Fourthly, we must work to improve the economic and social context for young people, create job opportunities, protect their rights and engage them in building the future of their countries. Finally, we look forward to the recommendations that will be proposed in June in the context of the review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

I would like to reiterate that the United Arab Emirates believes in the importance of countering extremism before it becomes violent, in an urgent and comprehensive manner. I would also like to express our appreciation for today's important debate and wish Egypt continued success in its presidency this month.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Peru.

Mr. Meza-Cuadra (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish to thank the Egyptian presidency for convening this open debate of the Security Council under the theme of countering narratives and ideologies of terrorism, particularly those threats emanating from such terrorist groups as the Islamic State, Boko Haram and Al-Qaida, whose discourse continues to fuel hatred and violence.

Narratives and ideologies of hatred and intolerance are the fuel that feeds the machinery of terrorist groups. Through these narratives they are able to recruit more fighters, receive greater financial resources and logistical support; they even use them to justify their actions. In this regard, we believe that terrorist acts should not be associated with any religion, nationality or culture.

Countering terrorist narratives and ideologies is a key element in the area of prevention and the fight against terrorist groups and their actions, as set forth in pillar I of the Global Strategy. This idea is further developed in the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (A/70/674), whose integration with the Global Strategy and methods for its implementation should be analysed more closely.

Indeed, on the one hand, we must focus on reducing the conditions and circumstances that lead to the radicalization of individuals, targeting the structural and conjunctural factors that undermine social cohesion. In this context, we believe it is crucial to promote the development of peaceful and inclusive societies.

On the other hand, in addition to material factors, we believe it to be of particular importance to build a culture of peace, dialogue and ethical values that downplay the personal motivations that lead radicalization and violence. In this regard, the use of information and communications technology also represents a significant challenge to the international community. When seeking to limit the use of social networks and the Internet by terrorist groups, we must also improve the capacity of States to use information and communications technology, with support of the United Nations agencies involved, with a view to limiting, countering and dismantling terrorist rhetoric.

Similarly, we must remember that terrorist groups also rely on alternative mechanisms and traditional communications platforms to spread and disseminate hate speech, often hidden in legal activity. Therefore, in full respect for the freedom of expression, we must neutralize these distorted narratives.

In the fight against this scourge, States, together with the entire international community, must adopt a strategic and comprehensive vision that incorporates the various pillars of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. In the fight against terrorism, Peru supports all international action in the multilateral context geared towards providing a systematic, sustained and efficient response.

Accordingly, we also consider both the conceptual work and the practical implementation of this vision at the national, regional and international levels to be of great importance. My delegation therefore takes this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General for his report on activities of the United Nations system in implementing the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, in the context of the upcoming fifth biennial review of the Strategy.

My delegation also wishes to recall the importance of finalizing the process of preparing the draft Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism, as well as deliberations on convening a high-level conference under the auspices of the United Nations. To that end, we must redouble our efforts to reach agreement on the Comprehensive Convention.

I reaffirm Peru's commitment to countering the threats posed by terrorism and violent extremism, and we assure you, Mr. President, that you can count on my delegation's unwavering support.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Djibouti.

Miss Hassan (Djibouti): My delegation joins other delegations in congratulating the sisterly delegation of the Arab Republic of Egypt on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of May and for the initiative taken to hold this important debate on countering the narratives and ideologies of terrorism.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the Ambassador of Kuwait, who spoke on behalf of the member States of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

I am confident that this open debate will give us yet another opportunity to better comprehend a phenomenon that has led to emergence of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), Boko Haram, Al-Qaida and Al-Shabaab, which poses a serious threat to international peace and security, thus unravelling decades of economic growth in many parts of the world. It will offer us an opportunity not just to understand how ISIL has successfully attracted some 36,000 foreign fighters from more than 100 countries, established an effective terrorist network with the capacity to launch deadly attacks in many parts of the world and created an online apparatus aimed at spreading messages of hatred and destruction and mobilizing impressionable individuals. It will also help us identify additional steps and measures to address the drivers and enablers of violent extremism and terrorism.

(*spoke in French*)

For many years, the peoples of the Horn of Africa have resisted the seeping-in of extremist ideologies. Unfortunately, as a result of unending attacks by extremist groups, our region has today become part of one of the epicentres of violent extremism on the African continent. The theme at the heart of today's debate focusing on the ways and means of countering the narratives of terrorism and violent extremism as well as the activities of terrorist groups demonstrates that the challenges we face are of both an intellectual and security-related nature.

The goal of radical extremists is to set up what some writers have called a "panic civilization", where each act of terrorism not only destroys the lives of innocent civilians but also creates a vast number of living but terrified hostages.

Their goal is well known; our determination must therefore be limitless.

Alongside actions taken through such organizations such the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation to prevent and fight terrorism and violent extremism, the States of the region have rapidly taken recognized the importance of beginning consultations to develop a strategy to counter the ideas and speech propagated by extremist movements. In that perspective, we have decided by mutual agreement to establish a regional centre for the prevention of and fight against violent extremism, which will be located in Djibouti.

In addition, under the leadership of President Ismaël Omar Guelleh, the second and third Regional Forums of Ulemas of East Africa were held in 2014 an 2015. Their main objective was to pave the way for reflections on the development of proactive and preventive policies to address the rise of extremist rhetoric, and on the most appropriate ways and means to expose and thereby discredit people and groups that bear such messages. I take this opportunity to highlight the fact that the conclusions of these meetings clearly stressed the importance of identifying methodological tools to better deal with the phenomena of terrorism and violent extremism.

Alongside this intellectual work to a better understand religious precepts, it is also important to strengthen the role of social institutions and educational incubators in training young people, with a focus on the role of media in education and in clarifying the aims and objectives of religion. In brief, we must prioritize integrated treatments that combine educational policies, socioeconomic development policies, and the review and drafting of legal texts.

The beginning of this year was bloody and punctuated by a series of heinous terrorist attacks around the world. This must serve to launch a decisive new impetus and international mobilization against the phenomenon of violent extremism. The adoption of the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, along with the impending review of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, will be an unprecedented opportunity for the international community. It is high time for Member States to agree on the need and strategic value of sending a message that fully incorporates alternative narrative countering extremist and violent messages.

In this perspective, we believe it important for the response strategy that we must formulate to loudly resonate with the voices and testimonies of victims of violent extremism and repentant extremist fighters. Indeed, their contribution to the demobilization and rehabilitation of recruits will be crucial and shed special light on the psychological process that allowed them to reject the deadly passion that animated them. Finally, in terms of partner participation, it is essential to have the full support of Internet service providers and owners of social networks. Every individual's right to freedom of expression must be weighed against the need to protect vulnerable people from incitement to hatred, discrimination and violence.

My delegation wishes to emphasize that violent extremism and the resultant terrorist acts cannot be associated with any religion, race, culture or society. It is also important in the fight against the phenomena of terrorism and violent extremism that we safeguard the promotion and protection of human rights. In that respect, the promotion of a culture of tolerance and moderation in all societies will contribute to the protection of minorities, including religious minorities.

My delegation deplores and rejects the rampant and growing Islamophobia in many countries, which is honed and amplified by opinion leaders and certain media. This is counterproductive and undermines the individual or collective efforts that are essential to the promotion of collective action to promote the values and ideals of respect and mutual understanding necessary to the peaceful coexistence of peoples and civilizations.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I give the floor to the representative of Costa Rica.

Mr. Mendoza-García (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): Costa Rica thanks the delegation of Egypt for the timely organization of this debate.

We have witnessed a dramatic evolution in the nature of the terrorist threat. In recent months, attacks on almost every continent have killed, maimed or displaced tens of thousands of civilians. We send a message of solidarity to the Governments and the peoples of Egypt and Iraq with respect to the recent attacks they have suffered.

Terrorism is more than ever a serious threat to States and the international community as a whole. The flow of foreign terrorist fighters — more than 30,000 individuals from some 100 United Nations Member State, as reported by the Organization — has further complicated the response to the threat. Terrorist groups such as Da'esh and the Al-Nusra Front promote the recruitment of young people through media campaigns with a narrative that presents the West as an enemy of Islam, which requires recruits willing to defend it.

In 2014 and 2015 alone, Da'esh launched more than 1,000 media campaigns for recruitment purposes. These were translated into Russian, English, French and German. Most consisted of videos showing terrorists in battle. The second-most recurrent theme consisted of interviews with terrorists who have been recruited from around the world. In that period, the number of foreign fighters grew by 70 per cent. If we want to prevent vulnerable young people who hold moderate opinions from becoming militant extremists, and militant extremists from becoming terrorists, it is necessary to address the ideological narrative used to draw them into their ranks.

In that regard, my delegation recognizes the importance of resolution 1624 (2005), which seeks, among other things, to prevent educational, cultural and religious institutions from encouraging extremist indoctrination by calling for Member States to legally prevent and prohibit incitement to acts of terrorism, in accordance with their obligations under international human rights law.

However, nowadays, when Da'esh recruits mostly through social networks and collective media, it might be appropriate for the media to consider the possibility of adopting voluntary codes of conduct for journalists covering terrorism, including, for example, avoiding the glorification of terrorists. Another possibility is to provide media communication opportunities to victims of terrorism and their families, thereby empowering the victims and giving them a voice. That voice should be transmitted in the same cultural language and through the same channels used by young people, like the terrorists do. Without affecting freedom of expression and the right of access to information, it may be appropriate to assess whether the establishment of guidelines such as those I have mentioned could be useful to counter the terrorist narrative.

The day after the bombing in Paris, a network campaign was launched under the title "Nous Sommes Unis", prepared by the Quilliam Foundation, a civil society think tank based in the United Kingdom. The campaign carried a message of peace in which several people, Muslim and non-Muslim, francophone and non-francophone, European and non-European, spoke of unity and solidarity, rejecting ideologies and narratives that divide and kill innocent people. That is a good example of possible actions to counter the terrorist narrative.

At the same time, Costa Rica reaffirms its belief in the need to address other situations that can create spaces for the spread of terrorism and its narrative, such as prolonged unresolved conflicts; the dehumanization of victims; the absence of the rule of law; violations of human rights; discrimination on ethnic, nationality or religious bases; the political exclusion; economic marginalization, and the lack of effective governance, among others.

We reaffirm the need for a comprehensive, multidisciplinary and multilevel approach, led by the United Nations. We take this opportunity to appeal respectfully to States that have not ratified the Arms Trade Treaty to do so without delay. The diversion of weapons to extremist groups could be reduced significantly if more States implemented the provisions of the Treaty.

Finally, we wish to reiterate the commitment of Costa Rica to preventing and combating terrorism in the context of respect for the rule of law and human rights, and we call on all States to try to bring to fruition the ongoing negotiations to draft the comprehensive counter-terrorism convention, with a view to adopting it as soon as possible.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I give the floor to the representative of Turkey.

Mr. Çevik (Turkey): I would like to thank you, Sir, for organizing today's debate. Our thanks also go to the briefers for their presentations.

We align ourselves with the statements delivered on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation today. I shall speak in my national capacity.

Unfortunately, despite all the efforts of the international community, terrorists continue to perpetrate deadly attacks. Terrorist organizations continue to recruit, deploying a morbid rhetoric of hatred. In that regard, we strongly condemnt the heinous terrorism attacks committed today in Baghdad, extend our sincere condolences to the families of the victims, and reiterate our support for the Government and the people of Iraq.

Every terrorist organization produces its own narrative and uses different ideologies in order to recruit, attract sympathy and support, and legitimize violence. Common to all of them are their attempts to inflict pain and instil fear on our citizens, to create chaos and polarize societies, and to weaken Governments. A case in point is the counter-terrorism experience of Turkey. Today, my Government is fighting simultaneously three different terrorist groups: the Devrimci Halk Kurtuluş Partisi-Cephesi, an extreme leftist terrorist group; the Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê/Yekîneyên Parastina Gel, a Marxist-Leninist organization trying to exploit ethnic differences in Turkey and the turmoil in Syria; and Da'esh, which manipulates religion. The latest bomb attacks in Ankara and Istanbul took the lives of 184 innocent people and left hundreds wounded. In recent days, more than 20 of our citizens in the town of Kilis lost their lives as a result of rockets fired by Da'esh from Syria.

It is counter-productive to adopt a selective approach to global-counter terrorism efforts, focusing only on one form of terrorism, group or cluster of terrorist groups. This weakens our collective stance and will not defeat the scourge. The best way to counter the hateful ideologies of terrorists is to make our societies more resilient against extremist narratives. Preventing young people from being attracted by the lure of terrorist groups is a key factor. Terrorist groups exploit frustrations, feelings of grievance, discrimination, social and political exclusion and socioeconomic marginalization, and target more vulnerable groups, such as women and youth. Protracted conflicts nourish conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism. The lack of rule of law and good governance and violations of human rights also contribute to creating such conditions.

Therefore, we should focus our energies on preventive efforts to counter violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism. In this regard, we agree that a broader approach is needed in order to effectively counter terrorism, as stated by the Secretary General in his Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, which will be given further consideration by the General Assembly in the upcoming review of the United Nations Global Counterterrorism strategy.

Turkey's own experience reveals that enhancing fundamental rights and freedoms, strengthening the criminal justice approach, reforming law enforcement and the judiciary, and enhancing a lively public debate have a direct impact and an added value in this regard. On the other hand, specific counter-messaging is also essential. As terrorists increasingly exploit new information and communications technologies, our global counter terrorism responses should also have a stronger communications component.

A communication strategy is therefore part of my Government's overall counter-terrorism efforts against Da'esh and other groups. A two-tier strategy is being implemented in this regard, consistent with human rights obligations. The first part of the strategy is to deny terrorist groups space for their propaganda, including measures to disable their communication networks. To date, we have closed down dozens of Da'esh-linked Internet sites, and in cases where the server is located outside Turkey we have banned access to online terrorist content. We are also conducting extensive operations against Da'esh facilitators, radicalizers and networks.

More subtle strategies are also needed. We conduct content-specific counter-narrative policies against each terrorist group. With regard to Da'esh, we encourage voices of reason and knowledge to speak up on the true meaning of religion, and we promote role models who can speak about alternatives to violence and terrorism. The role of religious leaders in contributing to these efforts is important. In Turkey, the Office of Religious Affairs, along with various Government agencies, plays a special role in ensuring that correct information on religion reaches the public and that religious teachings are interpreted appropriately. It endeavours to disseminate messages of non-violent and peaceful coexistence, dialogue and unity among peoples.

The focus on the role of religious leaders should not lead us to assume that religions are part of the problem. Terrorism and violent extremism cannot be associated with any religion, ethnicity or nationality. Any attempt to the contrary is wrong and dangerous, as it plays into the hands of terrorists. Victims of terrorism also cannot be treated selectively. Singling out the victims of a specific group and ignoring others also bears the risk of creating divisive perceptions. We believe that these messages should be embraced in words and in deeds by the United Nations system, including its Member States.

Protecting our societies from toxic indoctrination requires conveying messages of peace and tolerance as part of our common struggle against discrimination, intolerance, racism, xenophobia, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism and discrimination against Christians and members of other religions. It is in that understanding that Turkey has co-sponsored such initiatives as the Alliance of Civilizations and Mediation for Peace in order to promote dialogue, tolerance and religious and cross-cultural understanding to create an environment of mutual respect.

It should not be forgotten that the suppression of the democratic aspirations of the Syrian people, divisive sectarian policies, war crimes and massive violation of human rights that have been and continue to be committed by the regime have created a fertile ground for radicalization, extremism and the recruitment of foreign terrorist fighters by Da'esh. In that regard, the representative of that regime, which is also responsible for the flourishing of Da'esh and cooperates with that terrorist organization, is not in a position to lecture anybody on counter-terrorism. It is regrettable that this platform has once again been misused to distort facts.

Turkey is actively supporting global efforts in countering the narratives and ideologies of terrorism, including within the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum, and the Forum-inspired Hedayah Institute. Turkey is part of the Global Coalition to Counter the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, which has a separate Strategic Communications Working Group.

In conclusion, Turkey is determined to maintain its approach to combating terrorism and violent extremism in all forms and manifestations. Only with an open-minded and just approach and cooperation at the global level, and, most importantly, by upholding the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms can we be successful. These considerations should be taken into account as we prepare ourselves to review the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I give the floor to the representative of Tunisia.

Mr. Khiari (Tunisia) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like at the outset to thank the Egyptian presidency for organizing this important and timely debate at a moment when the world is witnessing the unprecedented growth of terrorism. We welcome presidential statement S/PRST/2016/6 and its acknowledgement of the need for the international community to consider the most effective means to combat terrorist propaganda. We must counter recruitment and incitement, including through the Internet, and mobilize mechanisms of international cooperation to that end. In that connection, terrorist groups have used the space provided by the social media to spread their propaganda and reach prospective recruits throughout the world. Thanks to the commitment of its political class to dialogue and the effective participation of civil society, Tunisia has been able to overcome the difficulties that the democratic transition process faced, in particular by adopting a new Constitution that upholds human rights, including the right to freedom of expression, religion and conscience. We were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for 2015 for our approach.

However, as important as these achievements are, they should not blind us to the magnitude of the challenges our country faces, especially with regard to the eradication of the phenomenon of terrorism. While Tunisia has achieved qualitative successes, especially on the security front, in combating this phenomenon by thwarting numerous terrorist schemes, eliminating many extremist terrorist leaders and arresting numerous suspects and bringing them to justice, it has witnessed several terrorist operations and has sacrificed the souls of its sons in defending its country. We commemorate the lives of four member of the Tunisian National Guard who were martyred today on 11 May in southern Tunisa while chasing a number of terrorists.

Tunisia is determined to counter this phenomenon through the use of the rule of law. In that regard, it adopted, in 2007, a foundational law on combating terrorism and money laundering, which was inspired by international standards and best practices and reflects the fulfilment of its international commitments, including the implementation of resolution 2178 (2014). Tunisia, in cooperation with the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, developed its national strategy to combat violent extremism based on the four pillars of protection, prevention, follow-up and response. That strategy has focused on prevention and on addressing threats by countering the attempts to polarize communities and the spread of Takfiri messages on the Internet and in prisons and mosques. The strategy also highlighted the importance of building a culture of dialogue, peace, tolerance and respect for all regions religions, beliefs and cultures and provided for the promotion of curriculums and the promotion of dialogue to resist extremist thinking. It also encouraged the study of the role of women in preventing violent extremism. The strategy focuses on mobilization via the Internet and encourages those specializing in Islamic studies, sociology and psychology to participate effectively in discussions on the Internet. Practical measures along the same lines have also been taken.

In 2016, the Minister of Religious Affairs launched the campaign for a better tomorrow, which involves the establishment of a cyber portal to propagate true Islamic values, in accordance with the moderate Zaytuni approach, and the establishment of a centre to respond to young men's questions about Islam and to convene meetings with young people in clubs and any spaces available in order to raise awareness about the gravity of extremist takfiri ideology and its repercussions on the State and its institutions. The importance of the cultural dimension in resisting takfiri trends has been emphasized.

While stressing that the main responsibility in taking measures to counter the messages of the terrorists and their takfiri ideologies fall on the States, in accordance with the principle of national ownership, we reiterate the importance of promoting national corporation and an exchange of best practices. In that regard, we emphasize the need to develop international corporation, including the promotion of private institutions, so as to ensure respect for human rights and freedom of expression.

Finally, we would like to affirm the importance for the international community to make further preventive systematic efforts to tackle the root causes of violent extremism in order to more effectively prevent it and to strengthen the capacity of communities to counter terrorist ideologies. We believe the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (A/70/674) provides a comprehensive guide to promote our efforts by adopting a preventative approach on the national, regional and international levels. The upcoming review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy offers a great opportunity to achieve notable progress in that direction.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Ambassador Khaled Khiari, Permanent Representative of Tunisia, for his statement and extend to him our condolences on the martyrdom of the Tunisian policemen in southern Tunisia.

I give the floor to the representative of Morocco.

Mr. Hilale (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): Let me first of all congratulate you, Mr. President, and your Minister on the assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of May. We are confident that the experience and wisdom of the brotherly country of Egypt, garnered over centuries and inspired by the great Egyptian civilization rooted in history, will guide your leadership and presidency of the Council.

The choice of the theme "Countering the narratives and ideologies of terrorism" shows that the Egyptian delegation has identified an important factor in the exacerbation of terrorism. It is through the use of rhetoric that incites violence that terrorism has spread like wildfire. The access of terrorist groups to the most sophisticated means of communication — the Internet, social networks, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and so forth — has facilitated their success on many occasions. Consequently, several countries have fallen victim to terrorism, including Egypt this morning, as well as Tunisia and Iraq. Every day more countries are added to the list of countries victims of terrorism.

The Kingdom of Morocco, which has also been the target of terrorist attacks in the past, expresses its solidarity with the three brotherly Arab countries. Morocco offers its condolences to the families of the victims. It reiterates its condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and emphasizes that nothing can justify any terrorist act. Terrorism can not be associated with any religion, civilization, nationality or ethnic group.

The past two years have been disastrous for the international community, which has been hit several times by the terrorist groups Da'esh, the Al-Nusra Front, Al-Qaida and Boko Haram and their affiliates. This list is likely to grow if the international community does not take appropriate measures to counter and, above all, erradicate the discourse and ideologies of terrorism.

The well-oiled financial machine, together with a sophisticated communication strategy, have enabled Da'esh by exploiting the Internet and social networks to recruit foreign terrorist fighters from all over the world. It has websites preaching its destructive ideology to which many young people and civil servants from different nationalities and social strata are unwittingly converted. This has brought the number of foreign terrorist fighters to more than 30,000, coming from more than 90 countries.

It is unfortunate and unthinkable that a family would wake up one morning to discover that their child, who had been well educated in good schools and lacked nothing, left to join the ranks of terrorists in Iraq or Syria or in other hot spots. However, without a counter narrative and with only a single hateful and incendiary discourse, young people have become easy prey to the forces of evil. The absence of measures to stem the misuse of information technology and the Internet allow terrorist groups to continue their dirty work.

Terrorist groups have no respect for life or humanity, much less for ethics and morality. They broadcast their atrocities on the Internet and social networks. They also exploit the public's right to information. Their terrorist acts are reported in the media, serving as an instrument to impress and take the lead in international affairs. The images of the barbarity of terrorists are broadcast in the media and newspapers. These latter, in the name of freedom of the press and against all ethical deontology, wrongly propagate these photos, thereby disseminating terrorist propaganda without realizing it. Accordingly, the trap of dividing societies and sewing confusion between a religion like Islam and terrorist groups that seek to identify with Islam is spreading and fueling Islamophobia, xenophobia and racism.

Worse yet, the media, television audience and newspaper readers are caught in this trap as they appropriate the discourse of xenophobia and racism, supporting extremist political thought. Without citing examples, journalists have become the spearheads of hate speech and xenophobia. The radical discourse in houses of worship, and incitement to violent extremism and the commission of terrorist acts are other means adopted by terrorist groups to achieve their destructive goals.

While resolutions 1624 (2005), 2178 (2014), 2199 (2015), 2249 (2015) and 2253 (2015) helped to respond to some aspects of terrorism, especially foreign terrorist fighters and the draining of financial resources of terrorist groups, other measures are needed. In this regard, allow me to advance some ideas that my delegation considers to rein in this factor giving terrorist groups access to a large global population of all ages and categories.

While the right to freedom of expression, access to information and use of information technologies, including the Internet and social networks, must be guaranteed for all, in law and in constitutions, it should not be exploited for the purpose of terrorism. It is therefore important to adopt new laws that, in full respect for human rights and the right to freedom of expression, prohibit the misuse of Internet.

We must also develop a counter-narrative that exposes the rhetoric of terrorist groups that exploit Islam to purely criminal purposes that our religion and the teachings of Islam have always condemned. Television channels dedicated to the dissemination of moderate speech should be authorized. The private sector, Internet service providers and the social media benefits must operate in compliance with the law and allow their customers to use the Internet solely for peaceful purposes and not to infringe the safety of citizens.

Imams must preach the true Islam of tolerance and coexistence with moderate views accepted by the youth of the twenty-first century. That is why the Kingdom of Morocco has restructured and reformed religious realm, in particular through, first, the establishment of a scientific authority responsible for interpreting the texts of the Koran and the Hadith, which explains the acts of the Prophet; secondly, the training of young male and female preachers in the precepts of Islam based on the values of dialogue, tolerance, moderation, coexistence and respect for others, as advocated by Islam; and thirdly, the creation of a programme for the deradicalization, rehabilitation and integration of foreign terrorist fighters. The Moroccan experience in training preachers has been shared with several friendly countries in Africa, the Arab world and Europe through bilateral agreements. Fourthly, interfaith discussions must be intensified. Morocco organized in Fez a forum on the role of religious leaders in preventing incitement to hatred in 2015, and a conference in Marrakech on the protection of religious minorities in Muslim societies, sanctioned by the Marrakech Declaration, to guarantee the security of minorities.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I give the floor to the representative of Cambodia.

Mr. Tuy (Cambodia): Mr. President, allow me to convey my congratulations to you and the Arab Republic of Egypt on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of May. Also, allow me to express my gratitude to you for organizing this highly important debate.

I wish to associate myself with the statement made by the representative of Thailand on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

Since the turn of the twenty-first century, terrorism has grown increasingly transnational, and the threat of the next terror attack has become ever-present. Indeed, this threat has no territorial limits, it knows no borders, and any city of the world could be the next target. Playing on the emotional reactions of anger, fear, and anxiety among the general population, terrorist organizations have been publicizing their despicable crimes on the Internet, targeting social media platforms to spread their message of violence and contempt for humankind. Regrettably, their efforts have enabled the recruitment of supporters.

My delegation is deeply concerned by the intensity and spread of terrorist attacks. We need to work closely together in countering the spread of terrorism and counteracting the violent narratives and distorted ideologies of these terrorist groups. In the fight against terrorism, countering extremist ideology and the narrative is one of the most important objectives to achieve. In this context, the international community must adopt an integrated social, economic and political response that would counteract the message of violence and destruction with a message of peace and prosperity. In this light, my delegation believes that the United Nations can play a central role in designing a comprehensive international strategy aimed at countering and refuting the extremist ideologies of terrorist organizations.

To that end, a number of measures could be considered, including addressing the root causes of violent conflict, promoting education and civic engagement in the attainment of the sustainable development agenda, and engaging the United Nations and its specialized agencies in the dissemination of a strategic agreed counter-narrative. It is important to note that any and all measures undertaken in this regard should be in full accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, respecting the principles of sovereign equality, territorial integrity and non-intervention in domestic affairs.

When it comes to terrorist recruits, there is no unified profile for law enforcement officials to concentrate on. The age, gender, social background and motivations of recruits vary on a case-by-case basis, making standard solutions difficult to apply. The international community should focus on addressing the root causes of violent conflict. Conflict prevention is the prerequisite for sustainable peace and respect of human rights. Undercutting terrorist recruitment and the spread of terrorism globally requires the adequate and stable implementation of social, political and economic conditions so as to put an end to long-lasting regional conflicts.

In your concept note, Mr. President, you rightly say that terrorist "propaganda exploits perceptions of economic and political disenfranchisement among young Muslim women and men" (*S/2016/416, annex, para. 5*), leading to their radicalization and joining of terrorist forces. As such, in promoting peace, stability and socioeconomic development, it is important to involve young people in the development of the future we want. The promotion of civic engagement programmes involving young people in the attainment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (General Assembly resolution 70/1), as well as the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, will empower young people and provide them with a sense of purpose. Furthermore, the promotion of education and volunteering programmes will provide young people with a sense of ownership in the implementation of global sustainable development action, breaking them away from the cycle of violence.

In our efforts to silence the extremist narratives and distorted ideologies of terrorist groups and thereby turn young people away from violence, it is important that the global community speak with one voice. That voice is best heard through the work and actions of the United Nations and its specialized agencies.

In practicing preventive diplomacy, we must decide on the core message of the United Nations, a message that would resonate globally, yet apply comfortably to local conditions. That message should be easy to spread in the print media and over the Internet, and be in line with the Charter of the United Nations. Moreover, the content of the message should be integrated into the work of the United Nations itself, with United Nations staff members receiving clear communication guidelines on how to inform the public about their work more effectively.

Developing such a unified counter-terrorism narrative could further strengthen the values of peace embraced by the Organization. Naturally, those efforts will require political and financial support so as to enable effective global action. As such, capacity-building, technological capabilities and financing should be ensured, so that less developed States can be active actors for development, thus contributing to the maintenance of international peace and security.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Thailand.

Mrs. Chartsuwan (Thailand): On behalf of the delegation of Thailand, I would like to express our sincere condolences to the peoples and the Governments of Egypt and Iraq for the recent senseless terrorist attacks.

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the States members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

At the outset, I wish to congratulate the Arab Republic of Egypt on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of May. We commend the initiative of the Egyptian presidency to hold this important open debate on the issue before us and thank the briefers for their insights. We also welcome the adoption of presidential statement S/PRST/2016/6 today, reaffirming the Council's collective determination to fight terrorism.

Terrorism is an urgent global concern. Terrorist activities are no longer concentrated in a single geographical region, but transcend borders and continents. We are unified in the firm belief that terrorism, in all its forms and manifestations, is totally unjustifiable. It cannot and should not be associated with any religion, nationality, civilization or ethnic group. As experience has shown, terrorism does not discriminate among its victims, and its impact is felt by people from all walks of life. That is why ASEAN has consistently joined the international community in condemning acts of terrorism in various parts of the world.

We believe that the experiences and approaches of our region can contribute to the global efforts in addressing that problem. Interfaith dialogue and the values of tolerance, mutual understanding, respect for diversity and inclusivity, as embodied in the Langkawi Declaration on the Global Movement of Moderates, adopted last year at the twenty-sixth ASEAN Summit, have played a significant role in sustaining peaceful coexistence among the cultures and religions in our diverse region.

As youth play an important role in building stable, secure and prosperous societies, it is imperative to raise awareness among young people of the risk of radicalization. We believe that education is an effective means to prevent our youth from falling prey to the extremist narratives and unfounded ideologies of terrorism. ASEAN countries continue to cooperate on the new ASEAN Work Plan on Education 2016-2020 in order to strengthen access to and the quality of our education systems so as to ensure an inclusive society. Moreover, education leading to decent employment will address grievances and lessen the perceived sense of disenfranchisement on the part of the groups most vulnerable to terrorism ideologies.

The ASEAN Convention on Counter Terrorism has served as a framework for regional efforts since 2011. We therefore advocate the finalization of such a legal framework at the international level and call on countries to actively work together to finalize a draft comprehensive convention on international terrorism.

Special attention has also been accorded to addressing the rise in radicalization and violent extremism. Recent key initiatives in the region include the East Asia Summit Symposium on Religious Rehabilitation and Social Reintegration in April 2015, the Special ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on the Rise of Radicalization and Violent Extremism in October 2015 and the International Conference on Deradicalization and Countering Violent Extremism in January this year. Those initiatives emphasized the comprehensive approach required to tackle the factors leading to radicalization and terrorist activities, address the rehabilitation and reintegration of individuals influenced by terrorist narratives and strengthen regional cooperation on the issue.

ASEAN has also worked with several countries to enhance capacities with a view to developing effective counter-terrorism and violent extremism measures. That includes the convening of workshops and seminars on issues such as criminal justice, deradicalization and disengagement, media and counter-radicalization and the role of youth. Trainings for law-enforcement officials is also on the agenda. For example, the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus Maritime Security and Counter-Terrorism Exercise is being held now in Brunei Darussalam and Singapore, involving forces from all ASEAN countries and several dialogue partners.

At the international level, while recognizing the primary responsibility of States to tackle violent extremism conducive to terrorism, the United Nations must be involved and take a coherent and multisectoral approach. That message was clearly echoed during the recent Geneva Conference on Preventing Violent Extremism, co-hosted by the United Nations and the Government of Switzerland on 7-8 April this year. In addition, we take note of the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (A/70/674). I am confident that further deliberations in June at the review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy will provide much needed inputs into the international efforts against terrorism today, including elements to counter narratives and ideologies.

We must put in place effective measures to prevent the abusive use of the Internet and to harness the constructive role of the social media in countering the dissemination of terrorist propaganda and violent ideologies. All measures should be conducted cautiously so as to prevent their infringement of the freedom of expression. We must continue to address terrorism's root causes, in parallel with intensive efforts to counter it at all levels. Conditions such as poverty, the lack of education, a weakened rule of law, prolonged and unresolved conflicts, and political and social exclusion can foster desperation and grievances that could lead to violence and terrorist acts.

ASEAN fully supports the international efforts to combat terrorism, including the full and effective implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions. Every terrorist act serves as a stark reminder of our need to remain vigilant and resolute in our fight against terrorism, which no longer consists solely of a battle against terrorist acts but involves a battle of ideas.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Poland.

Mr. Radomski (Poland): At the outset, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's timely debate. Poland aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the observer of the European Union. I would like to add a few observations from my national perspective.

Let me start by referring to the recent report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. In that document, the Secretary-General very accurately stresses that:

> "Terrorism cannot be associated with any religion, nationality, civilization or ethnic group. Demonizing specific religions, ethnicities and cultures is contrary to human rights, feeds into violent extremist narratives and encourages xenophobia, which can cause irreparable damage to efforts to prevent violent extremism and counter terrorism" (*A/70/826, para. 43*).

There is neither a political nor a religious justification for terrorism. All terrorist acts must be condemned, and all perpetrators should be held accountable.

Since the adoption of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy 10 years ago, the world has become more interrelated in terms of communications, trade and economy. There has been a corresponding increase in the dilemmas relating to the changing global security environment. In today's world, no clear line can be drawn between zones of war and zones of peace. Instead, there are conflicts where traditional divisions between internal and external, defence and homeland security, civil and military affairs are out of date.

The reality of rising terrorist threats is often misshaped by distorted narratives and ideologies, as rightly identified in the Egyptian presidency's concept paper (S/2016/416, annex). Religiously inspired terrorist groups constitute one of the gravest threats to international peace and security. Many of them use false interpretations of Islam, for instance, to justify their activities, attract supporters and recruit fighters, especially from among youth. It is our joint responsibility to take up the fight for the hearts and minds of those who are most vulnerable to such indoctrination. We should present an inspiring, positive alternative for those who are looking for a purpose in life. We should not leave a political, economic, social or spiritual vacuum that can be filled by extremists, and can result in, inter alia, the recruitment of foreign terrorist fighters.

In that regard, let me stress that predominantly Muslim countries have a special capability and responsibility to propagate a real, peaceful interpretation of Islam. The international community must support those efforts. We all need to do everything we can so as not to allow one kind of radicalization trigger another that is equally dangerous, namely, Islamophobia. For that reason, deradicalization is our common aim.

During the past decades, several legal anti-terrorist instruments have been elaborated within the United Nations system. Their full implementation, including the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, is an indispensable factor in combating terrorist narratives. It should be highlighted that the incitement to commit acts of terrorism is treated in some legal orders, including Poland, as an ancillary offence that can be punished, just as can the perpetration of a terrorist act.

We need to reach local communities to build positive examples for the most vulnerable. The Hedayah Centre in Abu Dhabi, working within the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum and the Radicalization Awareness Network, are good examples of such a responsible and proactive stance.

As underlined in the concept note prepared by the Egyptian presidency, countering the narratives and ideologies of terrorist groups is not a one-person task. We should engage all possible stakeholders, Governments, religious leaders, non-governmental organizations and the educational sector in that task. The international community has a duty to support the world of Islam in that endeavour. That is a role for the United Nations and for regional organizations. Poland is ready to support the United Nations in that respect.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the Permanent Representative of the Sudan.

Mr. Mohamed (the Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): The Sudan aligns itself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Kuwait on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

Kindly allow me to express our great appreciation for Egypt's initiative in convening this important debate on an issue that concerns the international community and requires our true will power and immense determination to confront. I would also like to express our heartfelt condolences to the victims and families of the recent terrorist acts in Egypt and Iraq.

Terrorism in all its forms and manifestations has become an imminent threat to all of humankind. It follows no rules. It is a global phenomenon that threatens peace and security and forces the world to live in fear and terror. The acts committed by terrorist groups have to date killed thousands, destroyed institutions and spread hatred, conflict and tension everywhere. The world is called upon, now more than ever, to review the existing strategies and plans, which have focused solely on the security aspects, with a view to developing strategies to deal with the socioeconomic and humanitarian issues thought to be among the root causes of terrorism, thereby taking effective steps to contain, combat and prevent the phenomenon of terrorism.

The international efforts aimed at dealing with terrorism, violent extremism and terrorist acts have not yet achieved the desired impact. We have a duty to review our actions aimed at putting an end to the phenomenon and eliminating its destructive consequences. In that context, the utmost priority should be given to efforts at the national and regional levels, where the factors and root causes of terrorism may be identified.

The Sudan reasserts the importance of the role played by regional organizations and stresses the need for coordination among them and international organizations when focusing on the international factors that give rise to the spread of terrorism. While efforts at national and regional levels have been undertaken to confront the national and regional causes of terrorism, there must also be international efforts to address the international causes of the phenomenon. Only in this way can we truly confront all forms and manifestations of violent extremism and terrorism.

Regrettably, terrorism is an ancient phenomenon that has existed throughout the ages. Indeed, terrorism has been present at every turn of human history. That is not a reason, however, for us not to hold accountable those who commit terrorist acts or encourage the spread of terrorism. Terrorism should not be linked to any religion, civilization or culture. We should be bound to this perspective and make no exceptions to it. Terrorism cannot be countered by terrorism. Reactive terrorism begins with a state of mind that distorts religious, cultural or intellectual groups and provides terrorists with justifications, pretexts and excuses for their acts. We have seen this time and again throughout history.

I would now like to share with the Council some of the Sudan's efforts in the fight against terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. In the context of implementing our national plan of action to fight terrorism, we have emphasized the importance of coordination and cooperation with the international community. Accordingly, and in cooperation with the Muslim World League, on 28 and 29 April the Sudan hosted the International Conference on Combating Terrorism and Sectarian Extremism in Africa. Our President, His Excellency Mr. Omar Hassan Al-Bashir, made an introductory statement at the conference in which he called for greater coordination and cooperation among all stakeholders in the fight against terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and expressed the readiness of the Sudan to fully cooperate in such an effort. He also stressed the serious dangers that Boko Haram poses in West Africa and the necessity of finding effective ways and means for dealing with it.

The Conference considered the following issues: terrorism in Africa: its causes and consequences; communal extremism in Africa: the dangers and consequences; countering terrorism and sectarian extremism: responsibilities and efforts; and countering terrorism and sectarian extremism in Africa: the means and mechanisms. We will distribute the text of the final document of the Conference to all States Members of the United Nations, as we believe it would assist in international efforts to combat this scourge.

Once again, we welcome today's important debate and thank the delegation of Egypt for its timely initiative. We welcome the adoption of presidential statement S/PRST/2016/6 and the collective message it sent with regard to countering acts of terrorism. We also welcome the practical recommendations contained therein for dealing with the phenomenon of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, preventing terrorist acts and cutting terrorists' access to resources.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the Permanent Representative of Cuba.

Mr. Reyes Rodríguez (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to begin by congratulating Egypt on assuming the presidency of the Security Council this month. I also welcome its felicitous initiative to convene today's debate on an issue of crucial timeliness and decisive importance for our work.

Terrorism remains today a serious challenge for the international community. Cuba has been actively involved in the efforts of the United Nations to combat international terrorism. It is the Organization's responsibility to take the lead when it comes to international efforts in this area. Our country has fully endorsed the call of the United Nations to States, international organizations and the international community to collectively refrain from financing, encouraging or supporting terrorist activities by any means whatsoever or from providing training for them.

We reiterate our rejection and condemnation of all acts, methods and practices relating to terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, by whomever, against whoever, wherever committed and whatever the motivation, including State terrorism. Any Government involved in an act of State terrorism must step up and assume its international responsibility.

We strongly oppose actions carried out under the pretext of combating this scourge, which violate the Charter of the United Nations and the principles and norms of international law. The fight against terrorism can never be a justification for sullying the principles of the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of States, nor can it be a justification for violating human rights and international humanitarian law or for carrying out torture, kidnapping, illegal detentions, disappearances and extrajudicial executions.

Terrorism cannot be eradicated if double standards and selectivity in addressing and confronting this scourge prevailing are prevalent. It is unacceptable that some terrorist acts are condemned while others are met with silence, are tolerated, justified or manipulated by others for narrow political or economic interests. Similarly, claims by some who seek to associate terrorism with a particular ethnicity or religion are also unacceptable.

For decades, Cuba has suffered the consequences of terrorist acts that have been organized, financed and executed from abroad. The number of victims of these criminal acts has reached 3,478 dead and 2,099 disabled for life. The degree of this human suffering is incalculable.

As part of Cuba's actions undertaken to fight terrorism in the country we enacted Law No. 93, entitled "Law against acts of terrorism," of 20 December 2001, which is a specific criminal law that defines and punishes criminal acts of a terrorist nature with severe penalties. Cuba is a party to 18 international conventions on terrorism, pursuant to which it has put in place legal and institutional measures designed to fight terrorism in an effective manner. Our country strictly complies with its obligations under the Security Council resolutions on the subject, and has participated actively in discussions on the work of the Counter-Terrorism Committee. It has also submitted, within the prescribed time limits, the information requested on the measures taken for the implementation of the resolutions.

Member States will soon begin the process of review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. In this regard, the United Nations should devote their full attention to discussions on a future convention on international terrorism. We consider the adoption of the convention to be imperative. It must be broad in scope and fill gaps and omissions in the existing legal framework, which will permit coherent international action against the scourge of terrorism.

An international convention on terrorism must establish a clear and precise definition of the crime of international terrorism that covers all aspects thereof and includes State terrorism. Its adoption would help to further the implementation of the Global Strategy and the progress of the international community in confronting this phenomenon. States must honour their international obligations and ensure that victims of terrorist acts, including the many victims of state terrorism, enjoy their rights.

On 6 October we will mark the fourtieth year since the mid-air explosion of a Cubana de Aviación commercial airliner off the coast of Barbados. Seventy-three people of different nationalities, including the Cuban junior national fencing team, lost their lives in that horrendous crime. Unfortunately, the notorious terrorist Luis Posada Carriles, who has acknowledged his responsibility for that bombing, has never paid for his crime. On behalf of the innocent victims, we will not tire in demanding the compliance of States with their obligations to prosecute or extradite all terrorists, without exception.

In conclusion, Cuba reiterates its unwavering commitment to the fight against terrorism. Multilateral efforts to strengthen the full implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and its forthcoming revision, will enjoy our full support.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I give the floor to the representative of Slovenia.

Mr. Logar (Slovenia): Let me start by thanking Egypt for organizing today's timely debate and the Deputy Secretary-General and the other two briefers for their presentations. We also welcome the adoption of presidential statement S/PRST/2016/6 this morning.

Slovenia aligns itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union.

Slovenia condemns terrorism in all its forms, since terrorism is a direct attack on the values of democracy, human rights, tolerance, solidarity, humanity and peace. We must strengthen our efforts in addressing conditions conducive to and the root causes of radicalization and violent extremism, which lead to terrorism. In this regard, the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (General Assembly resolution 70/1) is crucial. We have to make efficient use of the upcoming General Assembly review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and build on the Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism presented by the Secretary-General (A/70/674).

The concept of human security stands for a comprehensive approach to security that broadly encompasses the security of people and communities from violence, freedom from fear, freedom from want, and their right to live in dignity, which contributes to the elimination of violent extremism. As a people-centred and multisectorial approach, human security could lead to the implementation of an all-of-United Nations approach — one of the recommendations in the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism. Slovenia will assume the chairmanship of the Human Security Network in June.

Slovenia supports the strong regional focus in the Plan of Action. The Slovenian-led Western Balkan Counter-Terrorism initiative was endorsed by the Council of the European Union in December 2015. The purpose of the initiative is to set up an integrative and complementary approach of all international partners involved in counter-terrorism activities in the region that prevents duplication and overlapping, creates synergies and enhances the efficiency of a joint response. We hope that this model can contribute to efforts in other regions as well. The early detection and prevention of radicalization must remain the focus of our attention. In January 2016, Slovenia launched a project for the first-line practitioners dealing with radicalization issues, focused on awareness-raising and encouraging capacity-building in the Western Balkans.

The only effective way to combat extremist ideology is with counter-ideology — namely, education and intercultural dialogue. Recognizing this, the Slovenia-based Euro-Mediterranean University established the Centre for Arab, Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies in June 2015. The Centre aims to capitalize on cooperation on science and culture in order to build trust and promote intercultural and interfaith understanding among European and Arab Muslim countries.

Young people are especially susceptible to radicalization. We need to look for positive alternatives for the young, especially through education, jobs and their active involvement in political processes. In this regard, let me underline the importance of the recent efforts of UNESCO to step up its action to prevent violent extremism.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I give the floor to the representative of Montenegro.

Mr. Perović (Montenegro): We warmly thank you, Sir, for convening today's debate on countering the narratives and ideologies of terrorism, and commend Egypt's strong commitment to this relevant issue. We also thank today's briefers for their remarkable briefings.

Montenegro welcomes today's adoption of presidential statement S/PRST/2016/6, and aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union. I would like, however, to add some remarks in my national capacity.

We are too often faced with terrorist attacks and tragic events across the globe that are stark reminders of limited results in fighting terrorism, and thus call for more resolve, unity, coordination and active engagement from every single State Member of the United Nations. The ability of the United Nations and the international community to fight terrorism has been constrained by the inability of States to agree on a comprehensive counter-terrorism convention, including the definition of terrorism. Achieving a convention, including a clear definition, is a political imperative and necessity.

In the wake of the rising numbers of terrorist attacks, the evolving nature and growing complexity of terrorism, and the ever-present threat of terrorist groups such as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, Al-Qaida, Boko Haram and others, Montenegro considers it urgent to redouble our efforts in the fight against terrorism, particularly in the implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

The United Nations should strive to do more to provide political leadership to guide and encourage international cooperation against terrorism. None of us is immune to terrorist threats, and we need to work together effectively. In order to increase efficiency, Montenegro affirms that due attention has to be given to ensuring counter-terrorism coordination and cohesion within the United Nations system, including by establishing a new position of United Nations counter terrorism coordinator for all United Nations activities in this area. It would also help to improve United Nations interaction with external bodies, such as Global Counter-Terrorism Forum.

Today's violent conflicts and violent extremism are rooted in weak institutions and governance; the absence of respect for fundamental rights, rule of law and justice; unemployment, marginalization, exclusion, corruption and organized crime. It is important to keep in mind that societies with effective, inclusive and accountable institutions are more likely to withstand crisis and peacefully manage disputes. The 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda (General Assembly resolution 701/), particularly in Goal 16, offers an invaluable opportunity to make substantial progress and a difference in this area.

Measures to counter terrorism must be in line with human rights standards and the rule of law. The peaceful expression of views that are considered extreme should never be criminalized unless they are associated with violence. States should not misuse a poorly defined concept of terrorism to suppress political opposition or ideological dissent from mainstream values. Moreover, in counter-terrorism operations, States have to comply with international law and ensure the protection of civilians.

Montenegro is of the view that the fight against terror is a struggle to uphold the values of democracy and human rights, and not to undermine them. Counter-terrorist operations that are non-specific, disproportionate, brutal and insufficiently supervized violate the very norms that we seek to defend. They also risk giving the terrorists a propaganda tool, thereby making our societies neither free nor safe.

We have to do more to better understand the underlying drivers of terrorism to be in a position to confront this challenge more decisively. Engaging citizens — including not only families, women, and youth, but also religious community leaders — in public conversations on the drivers of radicalism and violent extremism would go a long way towards addressing them.

We must be aware that individuals attracted to terrorism are coming from vulnerable groups, and only if we find a way to address the root causes that led them to violent extremism and terrorism will we succeed in our intention. Promoting economic, political and social cohesion and inclusiveness and access to justice for all must remain a priority. For Montenegro, the focus should be placed on young people and their empowerment, particularly through employment and education, so that they can gain ownership of the policies that affect them and all of us.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I give the floor to the representative of Cyprus.

Ms. Krasa (Cyprus): Cyprus aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union and wishes to deliver short additional remarks in its national capacity. We thank the presidency for focusing the Council's attention on countering terrorist narratives and welcome presidential statement S/PRST/2016/6, adopted today by the Security Council, as well as its valuable and practical focus.

Countering the narratives and ideologies of terrorism is a crucial aspect of our overall counter-terrorism efforts. More than ever before, the sad proliferation of terrorist attacks — with this past week having no shortage of such deplorable acts — has become a constant reminder that terrorist organizations are successful in widely inciting and recruiting new fighters. Faced with this reality, we have come to recognize the need to counter-terrorism in a comprehensive manner. It is clear that the holistic approach required is both thematic and institutional. This precept maintains that no issue can be tackled in isolation or by individual actors working disparately.

We are certain that today's discussion will garner further momentum for the General Assembly's upcoming 10-year anniversary review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, in the context of which we also remain engaged in considering the Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism presented by the Secretary-General (A/70/674), which we have welcomed. The Plan is of crucial relevance, including when it comes to strategic communication and building alternative narratives. We see today's initiative and what is mandated through today's presidential statement as complementary to such efforts.

In line with the necessary holistic approach, our methodology for a globally devized solution to countering terrorist narratives needs to follow the principle of subsidiarity, empower action, and utilise knowledge at the local level as much as possible. In this vein, we fully agree with the emphasis in the statement on the importance of enhancing coordination and cooperation with the private sector, civil society, religious leaders and institutions, and educational and cultural institutions, as well as of the recognition of the role that victims of terrorism, among other legitimate voices, can play in countering radicalization to violence. Through criminal justice, information exchange, education and youth participation, intercultural dialogue, employment and initiatives for social inclusion, we can build up the resilience of our societies to terrorist narratives.

Today's debate showcases our unwavering determination to stand united, based on our shared values and goals, in countering the narratives of terrorism, in what is undoubtedly a long way ahead. Such unity remains the only recipe for success.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I give the floor to the representative of Afghanistan.

Mr. Salarzai (Afghanistan): I would like to thank Egypt for its leadership of the Council this month and for organizing this important debate.

Afghanistan aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Permanent Representative of the State of Kuwait on behalf of the Organization for Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

Let me be brief and to the point. Much has been discussed today about the internal factors involved in countering the narratives and ideologies of terrorism. While we agree with most of what has been said, let me focus on the external factors, particularly in the case of Afghanistan, and remind the Council that the creation of the Taliban in Afghanistan in 1994 opened the current tragic chapter of terrorism in the world. Before the establishment of the Taliban, terror in its current behaviour and form was little known to the world. The Taliban came into existence before groups like Al-Shabaab, Boko Haram and Da'esh gained notoriety. In a way, it was the Taliban and their backers who characterized the kind of terror that we witness today from various violent extremist groups around the world.

In the current global climate of unspeakable brutality committed by these terrorist outfits, let us not forget that it was the Taliban who stoned women to death; it was the Taliban who closed girls' schools, thereby denying millions of girls of their right to education; it was the Taliban who prevented women from pursuing a livelihood; and it was they who introduced suicide attacks on civilians and destroyed towns and villages in Afghanistan. One can easily trace how the Taliban long started promoting Al-Qaida and Da'esh-style divisive and hateful ideology.

Since the Taliban mushroomed overnight in the landscape of Afghanistan, mainly with foreign support, our entire population has been brutalized at their hands. The latest attack came three weeks ago, when an indiscriminate brutal bombing in Kabul led to the deaths of 68 people and wounded 350. But their vicious bloodlust has never been limited to Afghanistan. Let us not forget that it was under the Taliban that Afghanistan became the jumping board for international terrorism when thousands of young men received training and logistical support in terrorist camps. This was the precursor of today's terrorists carrying out deadly attacks in Asia, Europe, the United States, the Middle East, Africa and elsewhere.

So the question is how and why did the Taliban come into being? We need to ask ourselves how they learned to drive tanks and fly jets overnight, stage conventional warfare and capitalize on prolonged political conflict in our country? Who trained them? Who provided them with supplies? Who financed them? Who provided them with safe havens and orchestrated their spring offensives year after year?

Religious outfits and sloganism, as well as an ability to take advantage of the weaknesses emerging from the prolonged conflict in Afghanistan, were the cheapest and easiest ways to recruit for the rank and file of the Taliban. In this case, ideology and violent behaviour were used in pursuit of political objectives by circles within State structures outside our borders.

The question should be what motivated and still continues to motivate those circles to use violence through proxies in pursuit of political objectives at the national, regional and global levels? Three causes can be identified: first, negative State rivalry in the region with excessive anxiety and suspicion on the part of one State for the other's intentions, resulting in the adoption of misguided policies; secondly, the tension between military and civilian control in politics, an inherent struggle emerging from militarism in society; and thirdly, a trust deficit between States that has prevented constructive dialogue.

Hence, it is not, in our case, the ideology but the initiatory, enabling and facilitating role of political actors and their use of radical ideology for short-term gains that need to be addressed. Targeting the promoters and drivers of such policies, who use violence in pursuit of political objectives within the State structures, especially in the security apparatus, is absolutely crucial when dealing with the threats of violent extremism. In that regard, it must be mentioned that the differentiation between good and bad terrorists is futile, since all forms of terrorism are inherently appalling and must be condemned.

In Afghanistan, we have witnessed how terrorists and violent extremist groups take advantage of prolonged and unresolved conflicts, the lack of basic peace and security, and most importantly, negative competition between States to push forward their brutal agendas. The world today is in dire need of reducing State rivalries and addressing trust deficits. In that regard, regional countries and international actors bear particular responsibility to assist countries experiencing strife in their efforts to restore peace.

In conclusion, Afghanistan reiterates its commitment to engage constructively with the United Nations and other international partners to discuss counter-terrorism measures, including the upcoming biannual review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. We hope to achieve tangible results at the end of the review process.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I give the floor to the representative of Haiti.

Mr. Régis (Haiti) (*spoke in French*): It is an honour to participate in this open debate on countering the narratives and ideologies of terrorism. I would like, on behalf of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Haiti, to welcome this timely initiative of the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt.

The Government of the Republic of Haiti has always vigorously condemned terrorism, which can never be justified, whatever its motivation or origin may be. We are therefore pleased to participate in this discussion on the terrorist threat, the attraction of terrorism's hateful and intolerant ideologies, and the measures to be taken to counterbalance the ideological weight of the terrorist discourse, with a view to defeating the terrorist network, including global Islam-inspired terrorism.

Never has the threat been so formidable. It has steadily grown in scope and severity, as evidenced by the list of the major attacks and bloodshed that have been encountered in several capitals in recent years: New York, Madrid, Bamako, Tunis, London, Istanbul, Paris and Brussels, to name a few. No region, no country is safe from extremist violence. It undermines political stability, national cohesion, prospects for development and indeed the very foundations of some Member States. That is why this global threat requires a global response.

In adopting the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy a decade ago, the United Nations adopted an action plan that, in order to be effective in the long term, requires that each State understand this global threat better and implement a response strategy that is adapted and constantly updated.

The State has a major role to play in the unstinting fight that must be waged against terrorism, which, today, has resources, networks, affiliates and unprecedented means of destruction. This combat should, of course, be conducted in compliance with the rule of law. Strengthening security must be done through the mechanisms of the rule of law. We believe that effective counter-terrorism should not be achieved at the expense of distorting the balance between security and freedom.

The experience of recent years has shown that the strategies to meet the challenge of terrorism simply through a military or police approach are limited. In considering the results of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, the Secretary-General rightly underscored that the international community has been too inclined to prioritize the military and police pillars of action. It is fitting, of course, to welcome the results achieved in the military response, which made it possible for the international coalition to halt the galloping territorial expansion of the jihadist terrorist movement in Iraq and Syria, but that approach is far from having definitively slowed its growth. Given the developments related to this new type of terrorism, which attacks nations without distinction, it is clear that a response to terrorism cannot lie solely in repression. Repressive action, as indispensable as it may be, must be underpinned by prevention. That is why we support the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, which appropriately stressed the need to refocus priorities and focus more on the reasons why violent extremist groups are attractive.

Extremist political violence is often perpetrated by ideologically motivated individuals. Based on ideologies of hatred and intolerance, those groups distort and exploit religion. They trample on basic human rights, attack universal democratic values and the very principles on which international peace and security are based. The international community must, therefore, carry the fight against terrorism into the battlefield of ideas.

For that reason, the Republic of Haiti attaches the utmost importance to the establishment of international mechanisms, complete with resources and appropriate cooperation mechanisms, to counter ideological discourses that may lead to radicalization. It is crucial to significantly reduce terrorism's ideological appeal, because, to a large degree, that is what gives it its power. Strengthening international, regional and subregional cooperation in that regard is vital. It is to be hoped that the United Nations and its institutions and specialized agencies, including UNESCO, will support education and awareness programmes initiated by States, including in the developing countries, with the aim of raising consciousness of the risks and threats posed by terrorist ideologies.

For its part, the Government of the Republic of Haiti, which fully supports the fight against terrorism within the framework of the rule of law, is working to modernize its judicial system by strengthening the provisions that will enable it to punish not only incitement to acts to terrorism and their glorification, but also the propagation of extremist ideas, the dissemination of ideologically driven violence, and narratives of religious intolerance and incitement to racial hatred. Together with the State, all our social stakeholders will be part of that strategy, including schools.

Lastly, we cannot ignore the close relationship between the fight against terrorist ideologies and the fight to eliminate the conditions that allow extremism to thrive. The international community must be aware that keeping terrorism and its supporting ideologies in check also demands the settlement of protracted regional conflicts and eliminating the sources of tension that terrorist movements shrewdly exploit. Similarly, persistent, even increasing, poverty, inequality and social and economic difficulties, and the feelings of exclusion and marginalization among peoples and disadvantaged groups are all vulnerability factors, particularly in societies in developing countries, especially in fragile States. They cannot be ignored in the ideological battle against the proponents of violent extremism.

The United Nations as a whole, and the Security Council in particular, must continue to play their driving role in this fight, because terrorism is primarily a threat to international peace and security. But we must not lose sight of the fact that the threat is global and that the struggle must be for the long haul, based on a multidimensional strategy, not the least part of which is its ideological aspect. This fight is everyone's business.

The Republic of Haiti believes firmly that success in this fight will depend in large part on our collective ability to build open, equitable, inclusive and pluralistic societies, based on full respect for human rights and offering economic opportunities for all, as the Secretary-General has rightly reminded us. In that spirit, the Government of Haiti will continue to support all United Nations initiatives that seek to boost international mobilization aimed at finding effective solutions to the problems that fuel terrorism and especially to reduce the attraction of the ideologies that underpin it.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Bahrain.

Mr. Alrowaiei (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): I am very pleased to be able to thank His Excellency Mr. Sameh Shokry Selim, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the brotherly Arab Republic of Egypt, and the Egyptian delegation for organizing today's open debate on combating the narratives and ideologies of terrorism. I also thank the Deputy Secretary-General for his briefing at the start of the meeting, welcome the adoption today of presidential statement S/PRST/2016/6.

His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa of the Kingdom of Bahrain is proud of the role and status of the Al Azhar Islamic Research Academy in standing up to and confronting alien ideological practices, and of its moderate approach, serving as a beacon to the Islamic world, a reflection of the tolerant spirit of Islam and a vehicle for condemning all forms of extremism. The rise of terrorism, the spread of terrorist groups and the terrible threat that they pose to international peace and security form a crucial issue that requires the unflagging efforts of the international community. The threat of terrorism is everywhere. It does not differentiate between nations, regions or cultures, and the scourge of terrorist groups is a universal concern. Combating terrorism is therefore a collective and global responsibility that demands international efforts, if we are to save the lives of innocent people and maintain international peace and security.

Terrorist groups do not represent the teachings of religion and decent human instincts. Arab Islamic culture has always been based on the values of moderation, openness and respect for the rights of non-Muslim minorities. Dealing with terrorist groups will require persistent effort in many areas, including on the security, military and ideological fronts. In the ideological arena, we must combat those extremist ideologies, which go against human instincts, distort the teachings of Islam and abuse its spirit.

Besides cutting off the sources of financing for terrorist groups and limiting their ability to recruit, the Kingdom of Bahrain continues to confront terrorism and its organizations in accordance with its laws and regulations, working from the list of terrorist organizations that includes Da'esh, Al-Qaida and Hizbullah, and from international and regional lists of terrorists. The Kingdom of Bahrain has also taken a number of initiatives and enacted laws aimed at deterring terrorism. We have participated in the Global Coalition to Counter the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and the Working Group on Countering the Financing of Terrorism, and we are part of the liaison group within the Global Coalition. In 2014, Bahrain hosted the Conference on Combating the Financing of Terrorism, which issued the Manama Declaration. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bahrain has organized a joint workshop for the member States of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the United States of America on countering Hizbullah's criminal activities through legal means. We also organized a joint GCC and European Union (EU) workshop on combating the financing of terrorism, which recommended the exchange of information on the issue among financial intelligence units and judicial and law-enforcement authorities, as well as promoting cooperation between the EU and the GCC on cutting off sources of financing and promoting cooperation in international forums.

Lastly, I would like to affirm Bahrain's established position of principle rejecting terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, regardless of motive or the identity of the parties supporting and financing it.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I propose that the Council invite the Permanent Observer of the Observer State of Palestine to the United Nations to participate in this meeting, in accordance with the provisional rules of procedure and the previous practice in that regard.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I now give the floor to the Permanent Observer of the Observer State of Palestine to the United Nations.

Mr. Mansour (Palestine): At the outset. I wish to warmly congratulate the brotherly country of the Arab Republic of Egypt on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council this month. I wish its delegation all success in upholding its solemn responsibilities, and I remain confident of its skilled leadership. We express our appreciation to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Egypt, His Excellency Mr. Sameh Hassan Shokry Selim, for his presence at this important meeting to address the grave issue of terrorism and its threat to international peace and security. I also take this opportunity to express our deep appreciation of Egypt's constant attention to and efforts on behalf of the issues concerning our Middle East region, including in particular the question of Palestine.

Countering the narratives and ideologies of the terrorism that is plaguing our world and causing so much suffering and trauma for civilians and destruction in so many countries requires urgent, collective and comprehensive action. Extremist takfiri ideology, whereby religion is abused, distorted and maliciously interpreted to achieve the political objectives of terrorist groups such as Da'esh, Al-Qaida, Boko Haram and others must be completely rejected.

Those who espouse and promote extremist religious terror ideologies, whether they are Muslim, Jewish or Christian extremists, must not be permitted to continue unopposed in spreading their violent views and actions that are terrorizing millions of innocent civilians and destabilizing peace and security in the Middle East and around the world. Such terror groups and their false and dangerous ideologies must be countered by responsible efforts and cooperative actions based firmly in international law, including international humanitarian law and human rights law.

While the Security Council must remain at the forefront of that effort, eliminating the scourge obviously requires the mobilization of all capacities in the relevant realms of the international system, be they political, legal or financial. In that regard, our collective efforts must make a prioritity of genuinely redressing of the root causes of the problems in our world — whether political, security or socioeconomic —which are being exploited by extremists to recruit cadres to their ranks to serve their sinister objectives.

We are certain that respect for international law and a zero-tolerance policy for impunity would have averted the deepening of many of the grievances exploited by extremists to advance their ideologies and not allowed space for their fostering and growth. That includes, of course, the open wound and long-standing injustice of the question of Palestine, which continues to be cynically used by extremists to justify their abhorrent ideologies and behaviour. Moreover, it is imperative to undertake efforts to foster an honest, open intercivilization and interreligious dialogue that involves and reaches not only leaders and Governments, but also the average civilian, including young people and women.

Such a dialogue and cooperative efforts must reaffirm international law as the necessary guiding framework for international relations, rather than power and might. It must reaffirm commitments on that basis and respect for the law and human rights in addressing major grievances, including ending the destructive conflicts of our times and reasserting the true tenets of the respective faiths, including tolerance, peace and respect for humankind, so as to counter the distractions, distortions and misinterpretations that are being used by extremists to advance their ideologies and recruit so many, especially disaffected youth, to their ranks.

The State of Palestine adheres to the comprehensive position of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation regarding terrorism, as affirmed in numerous ministerial and summit declarations. Terrorist acts constitute one of the most flagrant violations of international law. Such actions undermine human rights, including the rights to life and security, and the fundamental freedoms of peoples and endanger the territorial integrity and stability of States, as well as national, regional and international security and the economic and social stability and development of States.

Violent, criminal actions intended to provoke a state of terror among persons for any purpose, wherever and by whomever undertaken, are unjustifiable in any circumstance. There must be no exception or selectivity in the application of that principle as we seek to confront extremist ideologies and groups and bring a halt to their terror.

Lastly, we must reaffirm that terrorism should not be equated with the legitimate struggle of peoples under colonial domination or foreign occupation for self-determination and national liberation. In accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions, the struggle of peoples under colonial domination and foreign occupation for self-determination and national liberation, including the decades-long struggle of the Palestinian people for freedom and justice, does not constitute terrorism and any such characterization or analogy must be rejected.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Myanmar.

Mr. Thein (Myanmar): It is my honour to speak at this important debate on countering the narratives and ideologies of terrorism. My delegation would like to associate itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Thailand on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

We congratulate Egypt on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of May and for convening this debate. My delegation welcomes the adoption of presidential statement S/PRST/2016/6 today.

Myanmar is equally concerned with the violence and instability across much of the Middle East and North Africa, as well as the possibility of encountering such incidents in other parts of the world, including our own region. Myanmar resolutely opposes any act of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. We share the sympathy for the victims of the terrorist acts that took place today in Iraq and for all of the victims of the narratives of terrorism in our time.

Today, we are facing an extraordinary form of terrorism that surpasses all traditional and non-traditional threats across the globe, as it intends to shake up the very fabric of civilized society and inject its violent and extreme ideologies into the hearts and minds of younger generations. On the extremist front, terrorism preys on vulnerable groups, such as women and children, and even soft targets such as medical facilities and health-care personnel. Terrorism ignores geographical and ethical boundaries.

The Internet and social media have also made it possible to spread the ideologies of terrorism and hatred in ways that are difficult to follow. Therefore, States must take every possible measure to track and deter such cyberelements on the Internet, using appropriate technological means. We must also holistically address the root causes, in addition to security and law enforcement retaliation, including by way of the political, social and economic means necessary to prevent such threats.

The role of women is important in participating in the decision-making process on all political, economic and social platforms. Children and young people must be cared for and provided with educational opportunities throughout their lives, with a view to knowing right from wrong, as a form of preventive immunization from the threats of terrorism and crime.

Myanmar enacted its domestic law on combating terrorism on 4 June 2014. We criminalized various forms of terrorism, as well as the financing and abetting of terrorism. We have also enacted domestic legislation to suppress the financing of terrorism and money-laundering, as well as legislation to provide mutual legal assistance in criminal matters. On the structural side, the necessary central control bodies and the Financial Intelligence Unit have also been established.

Myanmar reaffirmed its dedication to peace and security and to countering terrorism by signing the Additional Protocol to the International Atomic Energy Agency Safeguards Agreement in 2013 and by ratifying the Biological Weapons Convention in 2014 and the Chemical Weapons Convention in 2015. National implementation measures, in cooperation with the relevant treaty bodies and technical support agencies, such as the Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Risk Mitigation Centres of Excellence, are being carried out pursuant to the provisions of the relevant Conventions.

Myanmar respects and adheres to all resolutions of the Security Council, in particular those relating to the fight against terrorism, and cooperates fully with the Counter-Terrorism Committee and other concerned United Nations agencies. We welcome the vision of establishing a comprehensive international framework by 2017 to address the terrorism issue. To date, Myanmar is a State party to 11 international instruments relating to countering terrorism.

We are an active member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Convention on Counter Terrorism, which represents the collective regional efforts being made by ASEAN countries since 2011. We continue to work on the new ASEAN Work Plan 2016-2020 and seek to strengthen access to quality educational systems. The Special ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on the Rise of Radicalization and Violent Extremism in October last year strengthened regional cooperation on that issue.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (General Assembly resolution 70/1) and the 2015 Paris Agreement on Climate Change have created guiding frameworks for Member States to implement and build strategic partnerships, which could help us create societies that do not tolerate any act of terrorism while leaving no one behind in achieving those goals. The role of the United Nations is relevant to the preventive measures that can be taken to sustain peace and prevent violent extremism. The United Nation system can help Member States by providing technical assistance in national capacity-building so that they can address those issues in the areas and according to the priorities indicated by Member States.

In conclusion, Myanmar would like to reaffirm its commitment to engaging with the various agencies of United Nations, the United Nations system itself and Member States in order to address the threats of terrorism through available frameworks, including the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (A/70/674) and other relevant frameworks.

Myanmar will continue to work actively with regional and international partners to prevent and counter terrorism. Terrorism transcends religious, ethnic, cultural and territorial boundaries, as it threatens peace, stability and the development of all humankind.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): The presidency has received requests by several delegations to make further statements. It is my intention to accede to those requests. However, I would ask each delegation to limit itself to one additional statement.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to make a further statement.

Mr. Aldahhak (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I apologize for requesting the floor at this late hour. However, my delegation would like to respond to statements made by the representatives of the regimes in power in Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Turkey. Their statements included a collection of claims, falsifications and propaganda, in which they seek to present themselves as playing a certain role in fighting terrorism.

However, those three regimes are deeply involved in spreading savagely cruel terrorism and hateful extremism, as well as barbaric Wahhabism. They are also financing and arming terrorist groups and providing them with platforms for propaganda. They have also endorsed many of the terrorist attacks that have been witnessed by Member States of the Organization. They are bringing foreign terrorist fighters and mercenaries from all over the world to my country to serve their own interests, thus increasing the suffering of the Syrians, delaying the solution of the crisis and undermining political efforts.

United Nations reports indicate the presence of more than 30,000 foreign terrorist fighters in Syria and Iraq. We in Syria would like to affirm that there are, in fact, many more than 30,000. In addition to the 24,500 terrorists of Saudi nationality alone who have joined the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and other Al-Qaida-affiliated terrorist groups, many thousands more are present in other Member States of the Organization. They are all the product of the extremist religious teachings that they have received and are the ones responsible for committing all sorts of abhorrent terrorist acts around the world. Their actions have nothing to do with Islam, nor do they have anything to do with civilization. The role of those regimes in supporting terrorism is no longer a secret to anyone. Today, we have heard affirmations by States Members of the United Nations regarding the Turkish role in preparing and transferring foreign terrorist fighters to my country. As the Council is well aware, through its support for terrorist groups on Syrian territories Turkey has also interfered militarily. The Erdoğan regime is directly and indirectly involved in terrorism through its trading in oil and in stolen Syrian artifacts with Da'esh.

The practices of those three regimes represent acts of aggression in flagrant violation of international law, the Charter of the United Nations and the Security Council resolutions on terrorism. We once again call upon the Security Council to shoulder its responsibilities by condemning the practices of those regimes and by showing zero tolerance for their practices, with a view to making them put an end to their support for terrorism and criminal acts.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Islamic Republic of Iran to make a further statement.

Mr. Safaei (Islamic Republic of Iran): I also apologize for requesting the floor at this late hour. My delegation would just like to react to some of the baseless accusations levelled by the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia against my country.

It was ironic that he accused Iran of fanning the flames of sectarianism and that he preaches against it. Despite what he claimed, it is common knowledge where the takfiri ideology comes from and what its objectives are. It is also common knowledge who is putting that ideology into practice. The example of the inflammatory statements against various Islamic sects by influential Saudi clerics and officials, including the Government-appointed imam of the Grand Mosque in Mecca, clearly shows who is spreading sectarian rhetoric and inciting sectarian hatred. Indeed, a recent sermon, delivered on 31 March 2015 by Abdul Rahman Al-Sudais, the Government-appointed imam of the Grand Mosque of Mecca, contains hate speech and incitements to violence against Shiites.

> "Our war with Iran, say that out loud, is a war between Sunnis and Shiites. Our war with Iran . . . is truly sectarian. If it was not sectarian, we will make it sectarian. . . . Our disagreement with the Rafidha will not be removed nor will our suicide to fight them . . . as long as they are on the face of the Earth".

It is quite clear who consider themselves to be the only true believers and who have set out to destroy and annihilate the other sects in the Islamic world, including those outside the Islamic world.

In that respect, a cursory look at history books will easily reveal that the proponents of the takfiri ideology began their sectarian drive in the year 1805, when they launched an attack against the holy shrines in Najaf and Karbala and set them ablaze. A criminal sectarian act of that kind was committed in June 2014, when they horrifically massacred 1,700 Iraqi air force cadets in Tikrit, simply because the cadets were of a different Islamic sect.

We can agree that creating centres and financing organizations aimed at fighting terrorism is a good thing. But there should be no doubt that action is needed to weed out the elements that incite hatred and intolerance against those who are different. We believe that action against those who spread hateful takfiri ideology and against their proponents inside Saudi Arabia constitutes a necessary action that needs to be carried out in that country.

The Saudi Ambassador also referred to Hizbullah as a sectarian, terrorist organization. Here, too, it is common knowledge that Hizbullah forms part and parcel of the Government and parliament of a United Nations Member State. It is the group that helped drive the Israeli occupiers out of Lebanon and, in numerous cases, stood up to and fought the Israeli regime that is occupying the Palestinian lands. It is astonishing that an Islamic country finds common ground with the Israeli regime and issues exactly the same claims as do the heads of that regime.

Such statements run contrary to the interests of the Islamic world and damage the unity that we need to build in order to advance the well-being of Muslim people everywhere.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): The representative of the Russian Federation has requested the floor to make a further statement.

Mr. Musikhin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The delegations of Ukraine and Georgia have made a number of anti-Russian insinuations that have nothing to do with today's topic. We reject them as baseless and irrelevant.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): The representative of Ukraine has requested the floor to make a further statement..

Mr. Lisuchenko (Ukraine): In its right to reply, the delegation of Ukraine would like to raise the following points. We are deeply disappointed that, instead of finally confessing to committing aggression against my country, the Russian delegation has resorted to repeating false insinuations that do not convince anybody. What we have just witnessed is nothing but just another Russian attempt to divert our attention from its efforts to export terrorism to Ukraine. It represented a classic smear scenario employed by experienced criminals to shift blame and shield themselves from prosecution.

When we speak about the support that Russia is providing to terrorist organizations, that involves not only the financing of information campaigns aimed at cultivating hatred, resentment and radicalism, but also the fostering of terrorist propaganda in the occupied territories of Ukraine, the Donbas and Crimea. It also involves direct governance, military support and the supervision of terrorist activities.

I would just mention the situation in certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine, which the pro-Russian propaganda refers to the so-called Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republic as "new Russia". In that respect, the 29 March issue of the reputable German magazine *Bild* highlighted that the Russian side had established an inter-ministerial commission for humanitarian support of the affected areas in the south-east areas of Donetsk and Luhansk. Through that commission and its six working groups, the Russian Government is steering all affairs of the mentioned occupied areas. The said regions are being treated as parts of Russian territory, and the Russian Federal Security Service supervises each working group.

Despite statements issued by the Russian Federation on the future integration of those regions with Ukraine, the Russian side plans to secure the long-term existence of those territorial organizations under full Russian control. It also plans to create a puppet State whose future will be decided exclusively in Moscow.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I give the floor to the representative of Turkey to make a further statement.

Mrs. Özkan (Turkey): I apologize for taking the floor once again at this late hour, but I was compelled to do so, given the allegations just made by one delegation. We categorically deny the allegations made by the representative of the Syrian regime, which long ago lost all legitimacy.

What Turkey does for the brotherly people of Syria, in close cooperation with international organizations, including the United Nations, takes place before the eyes of the international community. Turkey is hosting more than 2.5 million Syrians, offering them shelter, protection, health care and education. As the suffering and destruction caused by the regime continues, as seen by the latest appalling attack targeting a camp of internally displaced persons in Idlib province, I just would like to emphasize that Turkey will continue to stand by the people of Syria.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): The representative of the Russian Federation has requested the floor to make a further statement.

Mr. Musikhin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*). I apologize for taking the floor again. However I will be very brief. Our previous comments apply fully to the comments just made by the representative of Ukraine.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): There are no further speakers inscribed on my list.

I thank the interpreters, the Secretariat and the Security Council members for their cooperation.

The meeting rose at 7.50 p.m.